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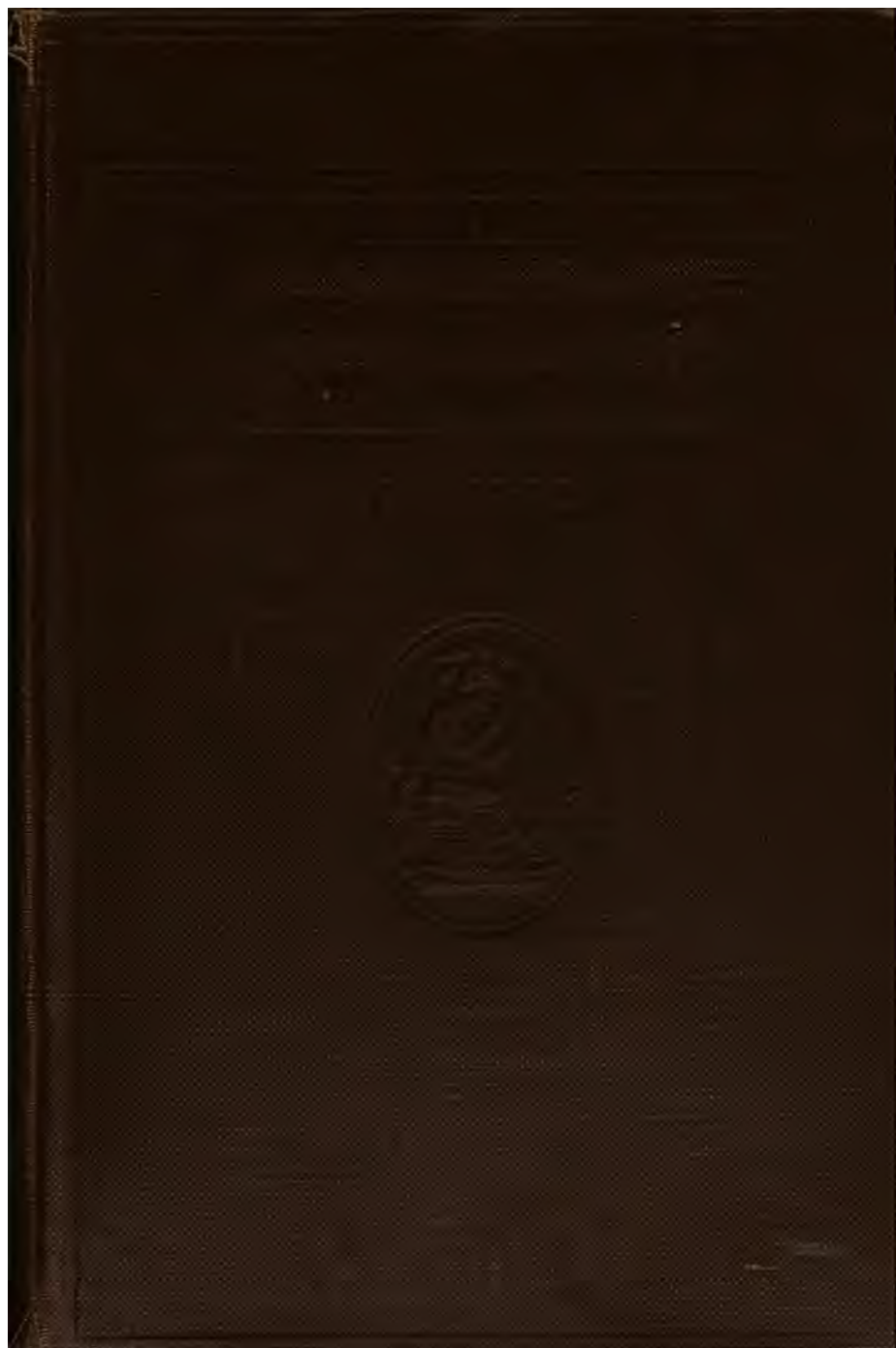
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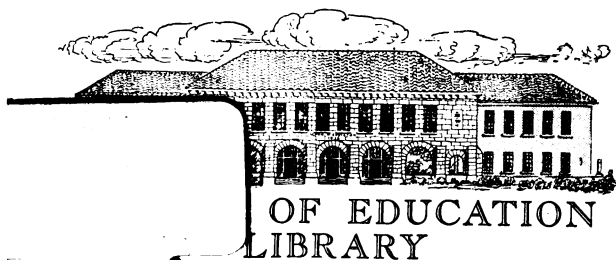
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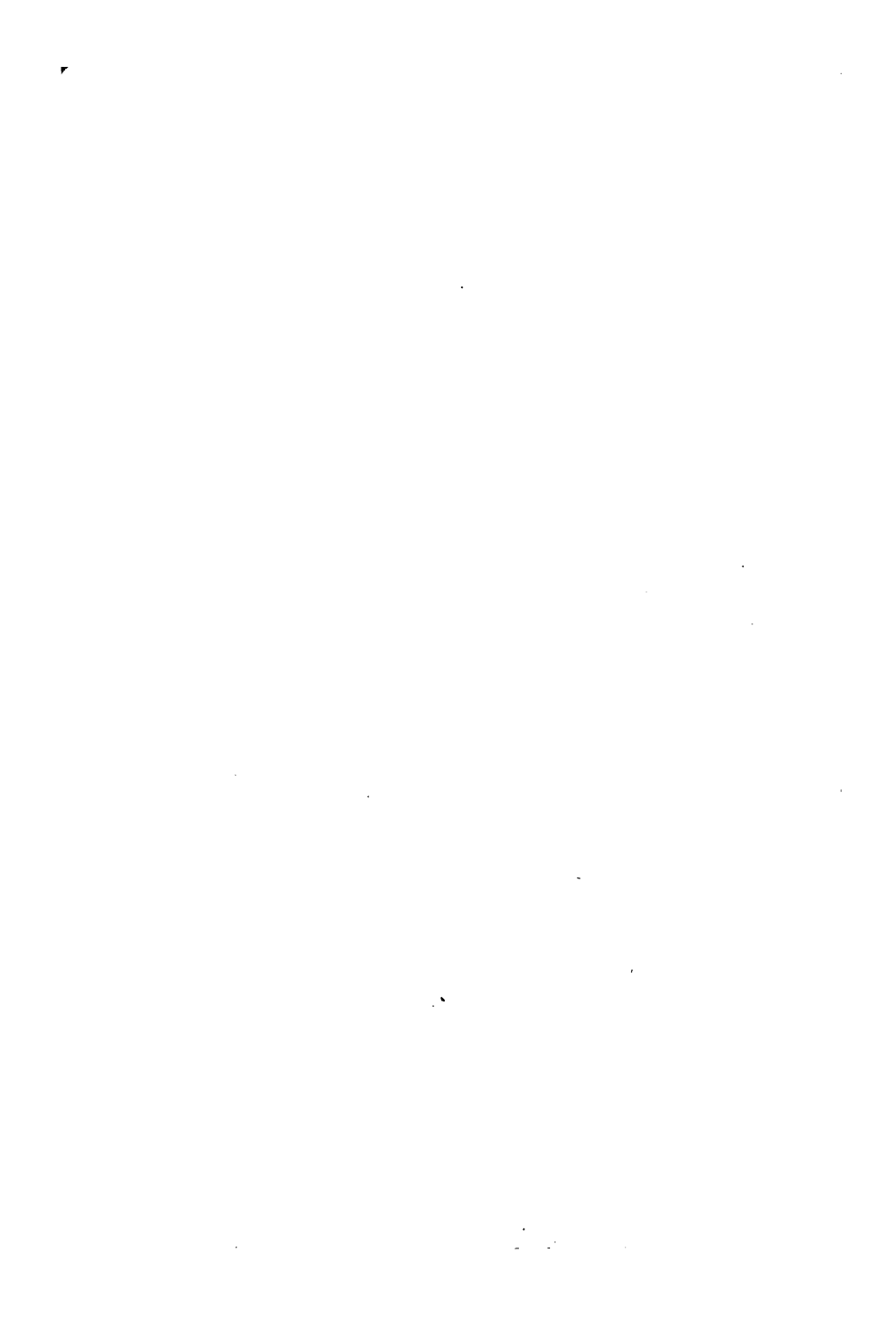


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# Riverside Educational Monographs

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## THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE KINDERGARTEN

BY

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## **PREFACE**

THE young woman who has finished her course in kindergarten training and is about to begin the business of teaching often finds it difficult to adjust herself to the new relation; difficult to bring to bear upon the problems which she now meets the various phases of knowledge which she has been acquiring in the past two years. It is possible that she has been surfeited with new ideas and facts, and many salient points in relation to child-training, and in relation to the agencies at her command, have strayed from her memory. She will have frequent recourse to her notebook; but even this repository of information will sometimes be found lacking.

To help the young kindergartner to refresh her memory, and to gather together some essentials in relation to kindergarten practice, is the excuse for the being of this little book. If it leads young kindergartners to a better appreciation of their work, it will have served its purpose.



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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

**THE** kindergarten is about to come into its own. For years it has been an institution little appreciated among the general run of sober-minded school folk. Traditionally it has worn an air of happy playfulness that concealed its educative worth from minds that are wont to see pedagogical value only in the difficult and the irksome. The most it received from pedagogues was a kindly tolerance which expressed the conventional belief that young tots are privileged to be pleasantly entertained while they are waiting for the responsible age of six to arrive.

But recent years of thought have greatly changed the professional status given to the kindergarten. Kindergartners themselves have become critical of their own doctrines. They now speak less of a mystical language and more of a scientific one. They have reinterpreted Froebelian principles in terms of modern psychological wisdom, and made both their words and their deeds more intelligible to the ordinary student of education.

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If the kindergartner is more comprehensible, the school-teacher is more comprehending. She, too, thinks more in general laws of psychology and less in the grooves of ancient pedagogical habit. She is receptive, in fact eager, to know any institutional experiences and resources which will offer proved ways and means of realizing modern pedagogical principles. More particularly is this true of primary teachers who work with children of near-kindergarten age. Already the more progressive among them know, appreciate, and utilize the principles and practices of the kindergarten. Soon all teachers in the elementary school will wish to understand and apply those truths regarding human growth which Froebel expounded.

The current professional interest in the kindergarten attaches to more than the teachers of the youngest children. The school executive and the educational theorist have been roused to an open-minded interest in the kindergarten. A constantly accumulating experience with playgrounds has led the schoolmaster to attach a new respectability to naturalistic modes of learning. A popular interest in the doctrines and methods of Madame Montessori has exerted a pressure on the minds of school managers, forc-

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ing them to think critically of prevailing procedures in the education of young children. The resulting appraisal has been favorable to the kindergarten, especially where its practice has been revised so as to conform to twentieth-century information about childhood. Now superintendents and boards of education discuss most earnestly the issue, Shall the kindergarten years become part of the universal provisions of a regular system of public schools? The answer given will depend on many factors in the argument, but one — the clear comprehension of the kindergarten itself — will be primary and fundamental.

To offer a small treatise which will satisfy the new interest of the public, the school administrator, and the class-teacher is a considerable service. The volume that follows offers more. It is a simple and helpful guide to the young kindergartner who hesitates between conservative dogma and radical theory, and knows not which way to turn. This monograph offers an excellent, working reconciliation of the worthy elements in both the old and the new kindergarten. Moreover, the readable form of the presentation will insure it a hearty welcome.





# **THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE KINDERGARTEN**

## **I**

### **THE CONDUCT OF THE KINDERGARTEN**

IN the kindergarten, as in the home, certain fundamental principles underlie the work of child-training. The kindergartner comes from the training-school with a more or less distinct, or perhaps with a more or less hazy, idea of the principles of psychology and pedagogy as applied to the immediate needs of teaching. Her mind, as well as her notebook, is primed with theory. She has had a modicum of practice. Of the actual conduct of a kindergarten as a whole, and of the problems involved, she is largely ignorant. When for the first time she is confronted with from thirty to forty-five little children for whose training she is to be held responsible, she is suddenly and very vividly made conscious of the fact that her psychology and her pedagogy must now be translated into terms of practical experience if she is to meet successfully the problems that beset her.

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### *The nature of the kindergarten*

The kindergarten should partake of the nature of the home, while foreshadowing the more formal life of the school that is to follow. There should be no distinct break between the home and the kindergarten, for the kindergarten is in reality only an enlarged home. It is the easy process for the kindergarten to degenerate into a sort of sub-primary school, and to lose entirely the suggestion of the home. The problem of keeping a happy balance between control and spontaneity, of holding steadily to the principle of freedom under law, presents so many difficulties and perplexities, that the young kindergartner is apt to give up the ideal as unattainable and to fall into that class of mechanical kindergartners who in time forget that they ever held ideals of better things.

### *Two types of kindergartens*

That subtle, invisible, yet palpable something which one feels the moment she enters a kindergarten is the keynote, to the discerning, of the character of the work that prevails in that kindergarten. It is what we are pleased to call "atmosphere." A kindergarten in which the

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children are kept constantly restrained until they assume the character of well-mannered puppets, responding perfectly to the will of the kindergartner, does not present an ideal condition. Stillness, formalism, routine, suppression of the children's spontaneous activity and of all initiative are the marks of such a kindergarten. Its atmosphere is deadening. The kindergartner herself has lost all power of inspiration. She is living on a dead level of mechanism. This is the easy way, we are told, to conduct a kindergarten. It saves the teacher; it requires less thought, less study, less expenditure of energy, and less waste of nerve-power. On the other hand, the kindergarten in which there is the hum of busy activity, in which the children, alive and eager, in an atmosphere of ideal freedom, are carrying on their work and play, gives us a situation where there is opportunity for the spontaneity of the children to find a natural outlet; where their activity is guided into channels of usefulness without destroying initiative. The atmosphere of this kindergarten is charged with spiritual ozone; there are light and life here; there are energy and power being utilized for good. The kindergartner who guides this kindergarten is capable of giving and receiving inspiration. For her, "kindergartning is

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not a craft, it is a religion: it is not an avocation, it is a vocation from on high." Her work is not easy. It calls for mental alertness and spiritual power; it makes a drain upon her nervous energy; it calls for study of her children; it asks of her that she bring to bear upon her work all her knowledge, all her skill, all her patience, all her faith. In short, it demands of her an unswerving ideal and in return it gives her a joy that is deep and abiding, and a development of mind and spirit which steadily enlarges.

Can there be any question which of these two phases of kindergartning, the young kindergartner fresh from school and full of enthusiasm will select?

### *A formal and restrained regimen*

To illustrate still further these two types of kindergartning, let us visit two kindergartens. It is the gift period when we enter the first. Fifteen or eighteen children, with hands folded, are sitting at their tables, while one of the children is placing the small fourth gifts at the back of the tables. After they are all placed, the teacher raises her arms, with pointer-fingers erect, and says: "Let us find the two front corners, the two back corners, the front right

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corner, the back left corner, the front left corner, the back right corner." The children, as the teacher gives the commands, raise their arms and with pointer-fingers, in unison, touch the corners as called for. There is no animation, no interest, neither is there any objection apparent to the observer, but entire obedience to the commands of the teacher. Supposedly these children know that their boxes contain some fascinating blocks, but there is no perceptible desire to get at the blocks manifested by any of the children. After several minutes of the foregoing exercise, the children are told to move their boxes to the center of the tables, and then, to the accompaniment of song, they open them slowly in unison. The teacher now proceeds to give seven unconnected forms, some by dictation, some by imitation, which the children follow obediently. There is no talk in connection with any of the forms, there is evidently no time for it, and there is no joy or sense of pleasure evinced by any of the children, neither is there seemingly any dislike of the process. It is evidently an everyday procedure, which is simply accepted as a matter of course. Five minutes or less before the close of the period, the teacher remarks: "You may now make anything you choose." The spectator

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breathes a sigh of relief; she is at last to see what the children can do. But it takes a moment or two for the children to adjust themselves, or possibly they are too fatigued for a fresh endeavor, and, alas! before a single form is completed, the command comes for the blocks to be put away.

### *A free and enriched life*

It is also the gift period when we enter the second kindergarten. Four children are assisting in placing the large fifth gifts before the expectant children, some of whom are seated on the floor, where a special space has been allotted to them; others at the tables. The children watch eagerly the four distributors until the last child receives his box, when in a quiet tone the teacher asks, "What have we been talking about to-day?" "The farmer," comes from the children. "What," continues the teacher, — "for I am not going to let you make just what you choose to-day, — what do you think I am going to ask you to do with your blocks?" "Make the farmer's house," says one; "the farmer's barn," says another. "Yes," replies the teacher, "I want you to make farm-barns, just the sort of barns you think a good farmer would build." "You

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may take out your blocks," she continues. The boxes are removed more or less rapidly according to the skill of the various children, and the children start at once to work. As you watch their play, you note that initiative is not wanting here: the children handle the blocks with ease and assurance, and while there are very distinct differences in the forms which you see growing under their deft fingers, due in a measure to the conceptions of farm-barns which the children have, and in a measure to the various temperaments of the children, every child works with eagerness and interest, and in the end the sense of achievement, of power, shown by each little child, attests the value of this procedure. During this gift play, the room is not absolutely still, yet there is no disorder, but the best sort of activity. A child occasionally calls to a neighbor to see something that he has achieved, or to the teacher for her advice or commendation. Some of the children at the tables sit, some stand, the rule evidently being that each may do whatever is most convenient for the work in hand. When a form is completed, the children are free to go and look at it, and comment on it, and so each gains through the work of the various members of the group. The teacher herself does not fail



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to observe each form, to commend its good points, to suggest an improvement here or there, to criticize in kindly fashion any bit of work that is done carelessly, so that the children may add to their experience the advantage of her wider knowledge. When the hour is ended, each child replaces his blocks and carries his box to the cupboard. Throughout this period there has been for the observer the sense of joyous activity. The home spirit is here; the children are natural, spontaneous, unaffected.

### *The achievement of the preferred type*

The children in the first kindergarten which we visited, make up that class of children who pass into the primary school, obedient, ready to follow commands, but so lacking in initiative that they are lost when left to themselves, and in the end bring down the condemnation of the primary teacher upon kindergartens and kindergarten methods. On the other hand, the children of the second kindergarten observed, form that class of children who bring joy to the primary teacher. They enter the primary school alert, intelligent, abounding in initiative, self-reliant and self-controlled.

Again, is there any question which of these

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two kindergartens shall stand as a model of kindergarten procedure, for the beginning kindergarten?

### *The basic importance of a true conception of freedom*

Granted that we prefer the atmosphere of freedom and self-activity to that of restraint and imposed activity, how is the inexperienced kindergarten to achieve this desirable end? In the first place, she must have a true conception of ideal freedom. Freedom does not mean license, nor unbridled liberty. It means liberty under law. She knows that she herself is only free as she obeys given law. If she disobeys the laws of her physical being, she becomes a slave to disease and weakness; if she disobeys the laws of the moral world, she becomes a slave to unfortunate habits, and her powers are lessened; if she disobeys the laws of the social world, she is only free, then, in the sense that she is free from the control of others. Freedom is some-thing that is only for the fuller realization of her own powers. It is an opportunity to obey the laws of nature and society, and to give freedom which is the basis of all other freedom.

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tunity for the fullest development of the total child.<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean that we shall supply an ideal environment, furnish all the agencies necessary for the child's fullest development, and then leave him to grow like a weed by the wayside. It means, rather, that having provided as perfect an environment as possible, having secured the agencies deemed best for stimulating the child's development, the kindergartner shall wisely guide the child's activities into useful channels. Dr. Dewey has truly said, "Guidance is not external imposition. It is freeing the life-process for its own most adequate fulfillment."<sup>2</sup> We must not fall into the error of those kindergartners who, in their reaction from formalism, have come to regard the interests of children as the center of kindergarten procedure — as the one

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that Dr. Maria Montessori, the present-day apostle of liberty, does not, as her book attests, stand for unbridled liberty. She says: "The liberty of the child should have as its *limit* the collective interest; as its *form*, what we universally consider good-breeding. We must, therefore, check in the child whatever offends or annoys others, or whatever tends toward rough or ill-bred acts. But all the rest, — every manifestation having a useful scope, — whatever it be, and under whatever form it expresses itself, must not only be permitted, but must be *observed* by the teacher."

<sup>2</sup> Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, p. 22.

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thing of prime importance. The interests of the children are our points of departure. As Dr. Dewey says, "Interests in reality are but attitudes toward possible experiences: they are not achievements; their worth is in the leverage they afford, not in the accomplishment they represent." <sup>1</sup>

### *The need of confidence between teacher and children*

It is impossible to lay down a definite series of rules for the conduct of all kindergartens, but there are certain fundamental principles of child-training which we believe apply to all classes, and lacking which, the ideal kindergarten cannot be achieved. Foremost among these we place the relation of confidence between teacher and children. This is a fundamental principle in right home-training, it is no less important in kindergarten training.

This relation cannot be achieved at once, it is a process of growth; but it is the ideal toward which the kindergartner must work from the first school-day. It demands of the kindergartner a knowledge of her individual children, and this interpreted in the light of modern psychology; a

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum*, p. 21.

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knowledge of the home environment of these children, and of the experiences to which they have been subjected prior to their kindergarten experience. It requires a wide sympathy with the various expressions of child-life — the ability, in short, to enter into the joys and interests of children, and to appreciate their sorrows, seemingly so insignificant, but to them big and portentous, as well as an ability to meet their mistakes and shortcomings wisely, tenderly, and firmly, to correct when it is necessary, and to commend judiciously, so that the children may always feel that “underneath are the everlasting arms of love.”

### *Children's interests as the point of contact*

The first thing which the kindergartner must do is to find the point of contact between the children and herself. This will, of course, be found in the children's interests, from which the kindergartner leads out to what she believes to be better and richer experience. There is no chart and compass to aid her in this discovery. The children's interests are affected by their previous experiences, and the mother-wit and insight of the kindergartner must now come to her aid.

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A Western kindergartner, who has been very successful in settlement work, tells us that, at the beginning of her work with this class of children, she had great difficulty in getting into touch with the children. Her usual kindergarten procedure fell flat. The children were dull and stolid. She could get no response, although she tried various methods. One morning, as she approached the school-building, she saw her group of stolid little people transformed into lively, animated children. They were playing a game called, "The Bluebird," and the zest and enthusiasm with which they were entering into the rather meaningless game set the kindergartner to thinking. When the children came in, she said to them, "Children, will you teach me how to play the Bluebird?" The response was instantaneous; and the Bluebird, followed by other games of the children's selection, took the place of the carefully prepared morning program. Gradually, she tells us, she was able to lead from these interests of the children to games and songs of better content, and to plays with gifts and other material, until at last she had as happy and busy a band of little people as could be desired. She found her point of contact, and she was not afraid to use it.

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The before-school time — that twenty minutes or more when the children are assembling in the morning — is the most precious period of the kindergartner's day. This is the time when she comes most closely in touch with her children, when they are, as it were, off their guard, and can be studied most effectively. Woe be unto that kindergartner who neglects this period, or puts it to some other use! This is not the time for the kindergartner to be preparing her exercises, it is not the time for her to be making out her register, nor is it the time for her to visit with her assistant. It is the children's hour: it should be sacred to their needs. It is the time for the personal greeting to each little child, for the warm clasp of the little hand in the teacher's own, and the word of welcome that makes the child feel that his presence adds to the teacher's joy of the day. This sends the child about his work or play with an added light in his eye and a warmth in his heart that cheers him through the entire day.

One cannot emphasize too strongly the value of this personal greeting. The formal good-morning which some kindergartners send across the morning circle to their children is a meaningless courtesy as compared with the personal greeting.

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The children at this period should be happily employed in service to the kindergarten. They may water the plants, dust the chairs and tables, or with miniature hoe and rake prepare the sand-bed for the day. That a child may love you, let him do something for you: that a child may love his kindergarten, let him do deeds of service therein. This makes him feel a sense of proprietorship, and a sense of responsibility in the kindergarten. It knits him to you by the bond of service. It is a pathetic sight to see little children enter a kindergarten room, and walk with staid steps to their seats in the circle, and there sit like pegs on a board until the regular procedure of the kindergarten begins. It is refreshing, on the other hand, to enter a kindergarten where in this before-school time there is an air of life and activity; children serving, children playing, children in intimate converse with their teacher. The atmosphere of the kindergarten at this period strikes the keynote of the character of the work in the kindergarten. It tells its own story.

A few years ago a kindergarten-trained mother entered her little boy in one of the public kindergartens of a well-known city. At first the boy went happily to school: he was full of enthusiasm. But there came a day when his step lagged, his



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interest seemed gone, he had to be persuaded to go at all. The mother, not being able to discover any good reason for this change of heart in her boy, thought best to keep him at home for a day or two. The teacher called at the home on the second day of the child's absence and frankly told the mother that the little boy had annoyed her by talking, — he was, in short, too spontaneous, — and so she had banished him from the kindergarten for a period, and the boy, through this punishment, which she acknowledged was too severe, had become estranged from her. The mother accepted the teacher's frank statement and returned the boy to the kindergarten. The child, however, went unwillingly. The mother, seeing that he was still in an unhappy state of mind, bethought herself of a device whereby the teacher and the child might again be brought into friendly relations. She took the little boy to a florist's shop, where she purchased a bunch of violets which he was to take to his teacher on the following morning. The boy, like all children, was overjoyed at the idea of taking a gift to his teacher. The mother accompanied her child to the kindergarten on the following day, and stood outside the door where she might watch, unobserved, the reconciliation of the child and the

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teacher. The teacher sat at her desk, her back toward the children, evidently at work on her register. The little boy went happily toward her and stood for a second at her side; she was unconscious of his presence; he tiptoed around to the other side, and, somewhat timidly, pushed his violets toward her; she glanced up and with the remark, "Oh, yes, put them right on the desk," turned again to her work. The little fellow's face fell, his chin quivered in his attempt to keep back his tears; and the mother, watching eagerly at the door, felt her heart sink within her. The next day she removed her child from that kindergarten. The teacher had missed her opportunity because she was not attending to the business of kindergartning.

Illustrations, both positive and negative, could be multiplied attesting to the value of the intimate relation of kindergartner and child in the before-school time.

### *The attitude of fairness as essential*

It would seem hardly necessary to say that an attitude of fairness in the treatment of the children is another essential in the conduct of the kindergarten. Yet it is true that many young kindergartners, and some not so young, uncon-

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sciously fall into the habit of favoritism. Frederick is bright, quick to respond to the appeals of his teacher, and in consequence, Frederick is continually called upon for various activities in the morning circle, in the games, as well as for special acts of service for the kindergartner. She forgets that there are other children in the kindergarten with a yearning desire for these opportunities which young Frederick monopolizes. They may not be so quick to respond, but for that very reason they must be sought out and brought out and then utilized. *All* of the children must be given the opportunity for service and for leadership in the various activities of the kindergarten. The kindergarten is not a place where that precocity of a Frederick or a Mary is to be displayed. The slow child, and the diffident child, and the dull child are all to have their opportunity for activity and service; for it must never be forgotten that the kindergarten is instituted for the *development* of the children, — and of *all* the children.

### *The use of subtle and varied means of discipline*

The subject of fairness in dealing with children leads us directly to the subject of discipline in the kindergarten. A professor of psychology was

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heard to remark: "There is no discipline in the kindergarten." He would have been more accurate had he said: "The discipline of the kindergarten is a subtle process. It is a part of the total procedure: it, therefore, does not stand out distinctly as a thing by itself."

### *Variations in the problem*

Dr. Maria Montessori's statement, that "discipline must come through liberty," is as true in the kindergarten as in the Italian Houses of Childhood. The atmosphere of freedom provides opportunity for self-teaching, self-control, and self-reliance. These are the fruits which show themselves in due time, but at the beginning of the year to the young kindergartner, undertaking for the first time the general conduct of a kindergarten, the discipline presents a somewhat serious proposition. Here are from thirty to forty-five little children of every type, sometimes of every nationality; children who have been subjected to good, bad, and indifferent home training, and sometimes to none at all. There is the stubborn child, who exhausts all your persuasive tactics, and week after week steadily refuses to join in the singing of the little folks. "I will sing when I get in the High School," is his daily re-

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joinder to your invitation for him to join with the others. There is the diffident child, who, to hide her embarrassment, takes on an air of bravado and is perpetually making herself the center of unlovely attraction. There is the spoiled child whose method of bringing his parents, and supposedly his teacher, to terms, is to throw himself on the floor and kick vigorously. There is the child of adventurous spirit, who already, at the age of five, has run away to camp out in a neighboring cemetery. There is the child who has no sense of property rights and takes what does not belong to him, as well as the child who has not yet gained a sense of the value of truthfulness. To these may be added the child of the over-exercised imagination and the child lacking in imagination. There are also a good measure of happy, responsive, normal children. Now, to bring into a harmonious group these varying elements is no small problem. It is right here that the kindergartner's psychology and pedagogy ought to stand her in good stead. Her knowledge of the universal tendencies of children and their significance is a basis on which to interpret the individual variances. She must look behind the deed to the motive that prompted it.

A young woman was in charge of a group of

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children who were playing a tournament game. The children stood in a horizontal line, mounted on imaginary chargers. In turn each child, holding the wooden sword aloft, galloped around the room attempting to take on his sword two hoops, which were held high by the teachers. A little boy stood at the end of the line patiently and expectantly awaiting his turn. When the third from the last child started on his round, the little boy at the end of the line began to prance and throw his head, a veritable imitation of a splendid charger. To the onlookers, this child was a delightful expression of a being absorbed in the game to the exclusion of all else, but to the young teacher he was a disorderly child, and she at once proceeded to check and condemn this exhibition of spontaneous activity. To be able to distinguish between willful naughtiness and spontaneous activity or superabundant activity is a prime necessity in dealing with little children. The teacher must train herself in the habit of looking for the significance of the acts of her children, and must therefore cultivate that discernment that will lead her to discriminate between essentials and non-essentials. With little children there are many acts to be overlooked and passed by as of no consequence. She must also

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realize that the child's acts are not final but transitional. As Dr. Dewey has said: "The child's present experience is in no way self-explanatory. It is not final, but transitional. It is nothing complete in itself, but just a sign or index of certain growth tendencies. As long as we confine our gaze to what the child here and now puts forth, we are confused and misled. We cannot read its meaning. Extreme depreciations of the child morally and intellectually, and sentimental idealizations of him, have their root in a common fallacy. Both spring from taking stages of a growth or movement as something cut off and fixed. The first fails to see the promise contained in feelings and deeds which, taken by themselves, are unpromising and repellent; the second fails to see that even the most pleasing and beautiful exhibitions are but signs, and that they begin to spoil and rot the moment they are treated as achievements."

### *Evenness in discipline*

The kindergartner's aim, as has already been stated, must be to develop the relation of confidence between herself and the children and to maintain an attitude of fairness in all her dealings with them. To these essentials must be added

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evenness in discipline. There is probably nothing in the home that contributes so unfortunately to proper child-training as the capriciousness of the average mother in dealing with her children. There may be some excuse for this in the home, but there is none in the kindergarten. Kindergarten is the supreme business of the kindergartner, and it is her duty to master all its details. The kindergartner cannot be irritated by the idiosyncrasies of the children; neither can she be governed in her control of the kindergarten by her moods and feelings. She must be guided by the *abstract Right*, the *ideal Best*.<sup>1</sup> Sound pedagogical principles must rule her conduct day in and day out. To do otherwise means failure.

Some one has said that we should look upon each fault of a child as the defect of a virtue, and endeavor to instill in the child the virtue lacking, rather than to dwell on the fault. This is a safe rule, based on good pedagogical procedure, and its use in the majority of cases works beneficially. So, for instance, the diffident child must be trained in self-confidence and courage; the child with the overdeveloped predatory instinct, in property rights; the overimaginative child must be brought

<sup>1</sup> *The Education of Man*, pp. 14-15; Herford's *Student's Froebel*, pp. 8-9.



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face to face with facts; while the unimaginative child needs the nourishment contained in fairy tales and imaginative games.

### *Positive and negative methods*

"Forbidding only charms. Don't teach a child to be wicked in order to show him what goodness is," is a familiar maxim, so the substitution of the positive *Do*, for the too familiar *Don't*, works most happily. The positive method turns the child's attention to new and better forms of activity, which in time become habitual with him. There are times when the use of the negative method is necessary, and the fact that it is not of common occurrence makes it the more effective.

The habituating of the little child to expressions and deeds of courtesy is a most important phase of child-training. Good-breeding is never to be disregarded. The community-life of the kindergarten lends itself particularly to this phase of child-training, and it should never be lost sight of by the faithful kindergartner. The kindergartner herself must embody in her daily practice the essence of good-breeding. For her children she is the model, and it is both interesting and pathetic to see their small attempts to

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re-live in their own little lives the qualities in her that make a vivid impression upon their plastic minds.

The office of punishment in the kindergarten should be remedial. It should be the retributive method whenever possible; that method whereby the punishment is the natural outcome of the misdeed. For the true function of punishment is to help the individual to see the nature of his error and to point the way whereby he may avoid its repetition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A little boy who, through heedlessness, neglected to use the doormat, to remove the mud from his shoes before entering the kindergarten, was given the dustpan and brush and obliged to sweep up the dirt which he had brought into the room. Two or three applications cured him of this habit. Another boy who indulged in the vicious habit of spitting on the floor was made to clean up the floor, with a liberal amount of soap and water, the process being made somewhat lengthy and laborious. The offense was not repeated. A child who persistently indulged in the habit of striking his fellow playmates, and upon whom various forms of isolation had no lasting effect, was guilty one morning of a flagrant offense. The kindergartner, feeling that the time had come for strenuous action, took the child from the room and told him in simple language that he was not a trustworthy caretaker of his hands, and therefore it was no longer safe to allow his hands to be free. She then bound his two hands together with broad cotton bands, and he was taken back to the kindergarten and given his usual seat. Through the morning-circle this little boy was permitted to discover what it meant to be deprived of the use of his hands. The kindergartner and the children stood ready to wait upon him — move his chair, and so forth. The teacher

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"Actions speak louder than words" may be applied very pointedly to kindergarten discipline. The young kindergartner who falls into the habit of delivering a somewhat prolonged dissertation to a child who has committed some fault, not only fails to impress the child for whom the speech is delivered, but has a most disquieting effect on the whole group, as was witnessed in a kindergarten not long ago. It was the game period, when one of the children began to pull and throw the line into confusion and disorder. The kindergartner corrected him, but he persisted in the error of his way. She then stopped the game and began to talk to the child, in the presence of the group. She continued until the whole group was restless and disorderly, and the boy had not mended his way. For her children her remarks were evidently meaningless. If, on the second offense of the child, the teacher had promptly removed him from the circle, her act would have had meaning, not only for the child

watched carefully the effect of this punishment, not wishing to carry it beyond what the little child could well endure. The child accepted it gravely. He took part in so far as he was able in all the songs and plays. No resentment was shown, for he was very evidently conscious of the justness of it. If it was not a complete cure, it certainly proved salutary for a long period of time.

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at fault, but for the whole group. One positive action on the part of the teacher is more salutary than reams of talk. The truth of this fact could be illustrated again and again in kindergarten practice. The children learn that back of all the sweetness and light of their teacher, there is a stiff moral backbone, and their respect for her is enhanced thereby.

Mr. Denton Snider, in one of his commentaries on *The Mother Play*, calls our attention to the fact that the father embodies in his character, in a large measure, the principles of justice, while in the mother the element of love predominates, and the kindergartner, if she is to be a wise guardian of little children, must combine in happy balance both these qualities — love and justice. And so, in guiding her children she must often do the hard thing, the thing that makes a pull at her heartstrings, if she sees that this is the thing necessary for the child's good.

### *Special resources*

The kindergartner has many allies in the conduct of her kindergarten. The self-activity of the children, given proper means of expression, is a power for good. Children whose whole selves, body, mind, and spirit, are wholesomely em-

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ployed, do, as the tradition has it, — “forget to be naughty.” The story properly employed is a most happy means of inciting to right conduct and better endeavor, while the community-spirit which the kindergarten itself furnishes supplies the elements which are the foundation of good citizenship, and therefore affords a condition in which the virtues of self-control, thoughtfulness, kindness, courtesy, and service thrive. In extremity, the kindergartner has the public opinion of this little community to turn to. There are few children so set in willful ways as not to be moved by the voice of public sentiment. It is an effective means of discipline when used with discretion, but must not be used unduly. In short, that subtle, invisible, yet palpable something, which I have referred to as the atmosphere of the kindergarten, depends, in its last analysis, upon the character and ideals of the woman in charge of the kindergarten. She makes her kindergarten — whether it shall be a place where the children express their spontaneous activity in an atmosphere of ideal freedom, or whether it shall be a place where the imposition of her will has changed the active children into obedient, well-mannered little grown-ups in an atmosphere of restraint, is determined entirely upon the

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ideals that govern her work, plus her ability to put them into practice. She must be conscious of her ideal, and she must consciously employ the methods whereby she hopes to achieve the desired end. If she so pursues her course, theory and practice will be brought into unity, which will express itself in the best of kindergarten procedure, and the reaction upon herself will give us, in due time, the "artist-teacher."

## II

### KINDERGARTEN ACCESSORIES

#### *The importance of favorable environment*

IN recent years much emphasis has been placed upon the value of environment. Some writers will even have us believe that if a proper environment be secured, other things will take care of themselves, so great is their faith in its influence. While the kindergartner is a firm believer in the influence and benefits of favorable environment she does not believe or maintain that an ideal environment will secure an ideal kindergarten. She has seen the ideal environment housing the mechanical kindergarten. She does maintain, however, that the environment may be a great adjunct or a serious handicap in the development of the true kindergarten.

#### *Hygienic conditions*

For this reason every kindergartner desires to secure good rooms, well lighted, and well ventilated, with proper sanitary conditions. She frequently, however, does not succeed in this

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endeavor, as boards of education are not always wise and far-seeing, so it happens that she often has to make the best use of an unfortunate situation.

### *Simple decoration and ornament*

It is, happily, becoming more and more the custom to simplify in the matter of the decoration and adornment of the kindergarten room. The day of paper chains and cheap ornaments is passing, and the principles of good art are being applied in the kindergarten as in the home. A poor room is not improved by over-adornment. The idea of covering baseboard as well as walls with a heterogeneous collection of cheap pictures does not better matters. It simply adds to the sense of confusion and disorder.

A good color-scheme and a sense of space are two essentials that should be sought for in the kindergarten room. In a room flooded with sunshine, the walls should be tinted in a soft, cool color, while, on the other hand, rooms into which little sunshine enters call for a color in which there is a suggestion of warmth. In small rooms the kindergartner should eliminate every unnecessary object. She needs to keep such a room from the appearance of being cluttered. Pictures,



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few and good, and such as have some artistic value, should be placed on the walls. It is true that the children as a rule do not take any marked and continuous interest in these pictures; but the influence of a beautiful and artistic environment does affect the child, although the fruit of it may not be apparent during his kindergarten days.

### *Pictures*

Kindergartners would do well to consult the interests of children in the matter of decorative pictures, instead of being guided, as they so often are, by their own preferences. Good art may still be followed and the interests of the children subserved. Raphael's "Madonna of the Chair," in the experience of many kindergartners makes a greater appeal to little children than any other of the better-known Madonnas. Pictures which tell a story, or pictures into which the children can themselves read a story, attract and hold their attention. For instance, Strutt's picture, "A Little Child Shall Lead Them," makes a wonderful appeal to little children. The true symbolism of the picture is beyond their comprehension; nevertheless, the picture awes and fascinates them, and their interpretations of the pic-

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ture, as shown by their comments, give evidence of the fact that the spirit of the picture has touched their little souls.

A few years ago some city kindergartners combined and bought two or three really fine pictures. These pictures traveled from kindergarten to kindergarten, a place of honor being given to them during the weeks in which they lingered with the children. This experiment proved unusually successful, the children showing keen and continuous interest in each picture and looking forward expectantly to the appearance of its successor.

A space — generally a frame mounted with burlap in a color harmonizing with the walls — should be provided for the placing of unframed pictures illustrating talks and stories. These pictures are, of course, changed from time to time.

One cannot lay too strong an emphasis against the habit of hanging pictures, like clothes upon a line, on a string strung across the blackboard. Thirteen Mother Play pictures were hung in such fashion in a kindergarten which the writer visited, while on another blackboard, in the same room, hung a dozen pictures dealing with the subject of the Nativity. The effect was not only inar-

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tistic, it had nothing to commend it. Fancy the confusion in the brain of a little child, resulting from trying to assimilate a dozen different pictures dealing with the same subject! Simplify! simplify! Remember the stage of development of a little child's mind! Remember his limited experience and have mercy upon him!—one cannot but exclaim when she witnesses such practices.

The pictures used in illustration should be few and carefully chosen. To show a child of kindergarten age LeRolle's Nativity and Correggio's, and two or three others, is not good practice. Select one good picture and let that suffice. When the child is older and can understand that these many pictures are the different interpretations of various artists, it will be soon enough to introduce him to these varying types; but now remember his years, and save him from blind confusion.

Little children love to look at small pictures which they can handle and pass to one another. A kindergartner secured a number of pictures illustrating various themes, purchasing several copies of each, from which her children gained great enjoyment and profit, used in this way.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The pictures secured were the Brown and the Perry pictures, and a few of the Mother Play pictures.

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### *Animal pets*

The introduction of animal pets into our kindergartens has met with success only in a comparatively few instances. Those kindergartens which are situated in places where the climate will permit of much outdoor life can easily provide the space and means for the care of such pets. In some few instances, where the rooms are spacious, a very large cage has been provided, which admits the opportunity of having and caring for pets, such as squirrels. In some cities a round of such pets has been kept in several kindergartens, — visiting pets, as they are called. This has proved fairly satisfactory, but in most of our city kindergartens, with their present circumscribed space and lack of conveniences for the proper care of pets, it is more or less a farce to attempt, in any large way, this branch of work, which was plainly advocated by Froebel, and has distinct educational value. It is, however, very necessary that the child have something upon which to expend the spirit of nurture, and for this reason goldfish are often a substitute in the kindergarten for animal pets, and, as they are easily cared for by the children, form a very beautiful as well as interesting feature of the

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kindergarten life. Some kindergartners are also very successful with aquariums. In the spring the little garden, planted and tended by the children, partially fills this need, and through the long winter months the plants which the children care for in a small measure compensate for our lack of animal pets.<sup>1</sup>

### *Plants*

The kindergartner who has plants in her rooms simply as a means of adornment, which either the janitor or she herself cares for, fails in a very vital part of her educational procedure. As has been indicated, the plants in our kindergartens, the living, growing things, are about the only means we have of giving to the children the opportunity to nurture life. The development of the nurturing spirit brings in its train a series of incipient virtues — care, time-order, thoughtful-

<sup>1</sup> If the boy cannot have the care of a little garden of his own, he should have at least a few plants in boxes or pots, filled, not with rare and delicate or double plants, but with common plants that have an abundance of leaves and blossoms, and thrive easily. The child, or boy, who has guarded and cared for another living thing, although it be of a lower order, will be led more easily to guard and foster his own life. At the same time the care of plants will gratify his desire to observe other living things, such as beetles, butterflies, and birds, for these seek the vicinity of plants. (*The Education of Man*, p. 112.)

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ness, kindness, love, are all generated in the care of a living, growing thing. But the development of these habits is entirely defeated when the kindergartner fails to make the *children's* care of the plants a daily feature of her program. We hear her say that the children cannot care for the plants without spilling the water, and that it is much easier to do it herself, and anyhow she thinks the value of it is overestimated. If the children in Dr. Montessori's Children's Houses can successfully carry tureens of hot soup across the room, and serve the soup to their little mates from these dishes, is it too much to ask that the kindergarten child shall carry a small watering-pot across the room and water the plants? Supposing he does spill some of the water, a cloth may be supplied with which he may repair the damage done, and in time he will learn his lesson of care. In the kindergarten, as in the home, it is the doing of these little deeds of service regularly, day after day, that establishes the beginnings of habits which are to be so valuable in the later life of the child. The kindergartner who neglects these phases of child-training, no matter what her excuse, not only fails in her Froebelian discipleship, she ignores certain claims of modern pedagogy.

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Mr. Hughes tells us: "He — Froebel — urged very strongly that all children should be trained to cultivate plants, partly in order to gratify their natural tendency to work in the earth, and to use their interest in productive activity and the nurture of living things, especially plants or pets. But he had higher reasons for making every child a little gardener, both at home and at school. Careful culture in the preparation of the soil and its proper enrichment, coupled with due attention to watering, weeding, hoeing, and, if necessary, to pruning, produces plants of grander proportions, greater beauty, and richer fruitfulness. By these results the child not only learns to recognize evolution, but it also sees that it may become an active agent in promoting evolution. It gains a conception — at first symbolic, afterward conscious — of the greatest of all truths — *that it has power to help other life to grow to grander life*. By sowing the apparently dead seed, which afterward bursts into life and beauty, it learns that it has power to start life to grow that without its aid might have remained forever undeveloped. The teacher or parent does not require to point the lesson. The symbolism of the unconscious stage of childhood will naturally become transformed into conscious character in due time. It

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is impossible to overestimate the advantages of a training that, through the self-activity of a child, reveals to it two vital truths — that it may aid all life — human life as well as plant life — to reach a higher condition of life, and that it may bring into existence new elements of living power, material power, intellectual power, or spiritual power, to aid in unifying and uplifting the race. The formation of these apperceptive centers in a child's mind qualifies it for the highest education it can ever receive. The life must remain comparatively barren in which these ideals have not been implanted. The time to implant them is in the symbolic period of childhood, and the process is the nurture of life in Nature.”<sup>1</sup>

The raising of bulbous plants, such as hyacinths, daffodils, and tulips, is perhaps the most satisfactory form of plant culture for the kindergarten. The presentation of the bulbs to the children, with a suggestion of the life that is sleeping in the bulb, the preparation of the earth in boxes or pots, and the planting of the bulbs, comprise a lesson into which the children enter with zeal and interest, and which they do not soon forget. In the weeks that follow there are

<sup>1</sup> Hughes, *Froebel's Educational Laws*, pp. 186-87.



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the visits of the children, in small groups, to the dark room to water the bulbs and look for signs of dawning life; and then comes the joy of the discovery of the little white fingers pushing through the earth. The bringing of the plants back to the kindergarten is a red-letter day, and now each morning the children watch eagerly the growth of these little plants, waiting patiently for the appearance of the promised bud, and faithfully attending to each plant's needs; and when at last a little plant bursts into full bloom it occupies an honored place in the kindergarten circle. It is truly the *children's* plant. Where there is a succession of these plants the spring becomes a prolonged joy.<sup>1</sup>

### *Sand-beds*

A sand-bed of some description has come to be regarded, and justly, as a necessary part of kindergarten equipment. As our American kindergartens are at present housed, the sand-table seems to meet the need most satisfactorily. With those who have worked with both the square and oblong tables, the preference is very decidedly in favor of the latter. Both for the free play of the

<sup>1</sup> These bulbs when planted late in October, generally begin to bloom about Easter-time.

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children, and for the directed play, it lends itself more successfully to the short arms of the little people.

### *Musical instruments*

The piano in the kindergarten should be a good one, but in too many instances it is a pathetic degenerate, a sad relic of better days. To train the ear of the children in distinguishing songs and rhythms, and to accustom them to good but not too elaborate music, is a legitimate use of the piano in the kindergarten, in addition to its regular office in connection with songs and games and other physical exercises. If used as a means of summoning the children, or calling them to order, it should be used *pianissimo*, rather than in the double *forte*, as some overforceful kindergartners seem to think necessary. The triangle with its silver tone is a specially happy means of giving signals in the kindergarten. It is much to be desired that kindergartners substitute this for the sparring of the hands, which savors too often of inner irritation.

### *Toys*

A few carefully selected toys to supplement the gifts may properly be included in a kindergarten equipment. They should, however, be chosen

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with an eye to stability and usefulness. Cheap toys should find no place in a kindergarten. A toy with which the children can do something is the ideal toy. A box, containing very perfect copies of domestic animals, was purchased for one kindergarten and the animals used very successfully with the gifts and the sand-table.

Small dolls for the doll-house make the doll-house mean much more to the children than the untenanted house. Paper dolls are often specially good in this connection. Balls of various sizes and sorts are always desirable. The doll, her bed, and her carriage, are a never-ending source of comfort to the little girls, and to some of the boys, as well as a directly educative agent. Experience leads one to speak very emphatically of the value of a doll or dolls in the kindergarten. Properly used, the doll is a direct civilizer.

In one kindergarten, a little doll, not more than ten or eleven inches in height, dressed in a simple gingham gown, modeled after those worn by many of the little girls in the kindergarten, was introduced one morning as a newcomer. She was received with acclamations of delight, and a little time was spent in selecting a name, Mary being ultimately chosen by unanimous consent. From this time on, Mary was a regular attend-

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ant. She was a conspicuous figure in the morning circle, where she was tenderly held in the arms of either a little girl or a little boy, for the boys, irrespective of their ages, vied with the girls in their claims on Mary. Some mornings she wandered from child to child, and every morning the children sang the greeting to her. A little red chair was at Mary's disposal during the game and work periods, and at the end of the day she was carefully put to bed. The making of the doll's bed and the dressing of Mary were two of the duties in the before-school period. It was delightful to see the incipient virtues that followed in the wake of Mary, — selfish impulses stifled and generous ones taking their place, tenderness and care supplanting rudeness and thoughtlessness, and fair-play becoming the accepted rule of this group of young Americans.

### *Play apparatus*

If the kindergarten meets the demands of modern psychologists, it must be equipped with apparatus suited to the physical needs of children from four to six years of age. Apparatus for climbing, swinging, and walking plays is advised by experts as necessary for the muscular development of the growing child. The need of some such

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apparatus is specially urgent for the children of our large cities, who are deprived of the natural incentives to muscular exercise which the country children find in the world of nature. If our kindergartens could be equipped with such apparatus, which the children would be permitted to use at will during the morning, much of the adverse criticism of scientists would be done away with. Certainly child-psychologists and kindergartners should work together. Their interests should be the same.

It is very true that comparatively few of our kindergartens are at present housed in rooms large enough for the admission of much, if any, apparatus. It is also true that kindergartners will have to overcome many obstacles before the introduction of such apparatus will become general. But the ideal should be held and worked for; and it is certain that if the general body of kindergartners would work as a unit for this necessary addition to kindergarten furnishings, the time would not be far distant when our school boards would feel the insistence of the claim and meet the demand.

The idea that our kindergarten games meet all the needs for the muscular development of the children no longer holds good. That they are a

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help when properly played, no one will deny, but that they often, in the hands of an unwise teacher, defeat their very purpose of recreation and muscular exercise, every fair-minded kindergartner must admit. The games also come at a stated period, whereas the apparatus stands as an invitation to the child at any time that the muscular hunger may be upon him. It may be objected that chaos would be the result of such a procedure as the use of the apparatus indicated above; but we affirm confidently that any efficient kindergartner will be able to adjust both herself and her children to the new order, and still maintain freedom under law.

The accessories of a kindergarten, if properly selected, are, therefore, helps in the conduct of a kindergarten. With the necessary accessories, the kindergartner has less to contend with and so more easily and successfully works out her ideals of kindergarten procedure. They, in a measure, form the background for that ideal atmosphere for which she is working, and so are not to be lightly set aside as matters of small moment.

In the kindergarten, as in the home, the environment, which expresses refined taste, acts, even if imperceptibly for the present, surely and

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continuously upon the æsthetic sense of the individual, and in this busy world, in which there is so much striving for the betterment of all classes, this phase of education must not be lost sight of. On the other hand, all that helps to build up a vigorous physical development is even more important; for sound physical health makes for sound moral and mental development.

### III

#### THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

##### A. THE GENESIS

###### *The bases of program-making*

DURING the past few years attention has been repeatedly directed to the subject of the kindergarten program. Programs of various kinds have been made and remade. We have had programs based on the Mother Play; programs whose form followed the immediate interests of the children; programs which found their motive in the various phases of institutional life; and programs which gained their inspiration from the world of nature. There have been, on the one hand, advocates of a uniform program, developed by kindergartners of large experience and true insight; while, on the other hand, there have been equally zealous advocates of original programs, prepared by the individual teachers.



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### *The early dominance of logical and formal programs*

In the early days of program-making, and to some extent to-day, it is undoubtedly true that the programs were more or less logical and formal. They were developed from the intellectual point of view and presented to the children subjects with which the kindergartner believed the children should be familiar. These subjects were developed in an orderly and more or less related fashion. It was unquestionably subject-matter imposed from without. The tendency then was to crowd the program. The kindergartner, particularly the young kindergartner, labored under the delusion that she must bring to the children facts in relation to a wide range of subjects, without considering whether or not they functioned in the children's experience. She had not learned that the need of wide knowledge on her part was not that she might impart it to the children, but that it might be an illuminating means by which she could meet the needs of the children wisely and sanely.

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### *Factors influencing the evolution of the program*

The evolution of the kindergarten program has come about not so much through a radical change of subject-matter as through the recognition of principles which govern educational procedure. We have come to see that the educational problem presents two aspects, the psychological and the sociological, which are mutually related. The educative process is defined as one of interaction between the immature, undeveloped individual (the psychological factor) and "certain social aims, meanings, and values incarnate in the matured experience of the adult" (the sociological factor).<sup>1</sup>

This has led, naturally, to a study of both factors of our problem — the undeveloped child and the matured life of the social whole, and the relation which they sustain to one another. We have learned through this study something of the nature of the little child, of the character of his experiences, and of his attitude toward life. We have found that he is an emotional creature, guided largely in his actions by feelings of affection and sympathy, the reasoning powers as yet being in abeyance; that the little world in which

<sup>1</sup> Dewey's *The Child and the Curriculum*, p. 8.

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he moves is a narrow and personal world, limited by his experiences; that his experiences, which to us seem disjointed and separated, constitute for him a unity. We know, then, that the little child guided by his feelings, not yet possessing judgment, but filled with a keen zest for investigating the life about him, is confronted by a world of overwhelming magnitude, which acts upon him and upon which he reacts. The interactionary process has its small beginnings in the early months of the child's life, and continues in increasing measure so long as he lives.

### *Education is an interactionary process*

The problem that challenges the teacher when the little child comes into her keeping is, What agencies shall she select from these innumerable phases of life that surround the child, to facilitate the interactionary process? It is self-evident that the matured life of the social whole, to which the child must in some way or other become adjusted and which he must assimilate in himself, has been largely shaped and modified by what is sometimes called "the spiritual inheritance of the race." The problem of the teacher may therefore be restated as, What agencies will best help the child to become adjusted to the world in which

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he lives, so that he may gain from this race inheritance what is best for himself, so that in the end he may contribute his share toward its furtherance and enlargement? It is, we trust, needless to say that the kindergarten can make only the small beginning in this necessary adjustment.

### *The pathways of adjustment*

What do we mean by the "spiritual inheritance" of the race, or the "spiritual possessions" of the race, as it is sometimes termed? We mean, without doubt, those agencies which have contributed to the development and advancement of civilization, and which, generation after generation, have proved themselves of permanent worth. There comes to mind, at once, the great moral and religious forces which have contributed to the making of noble men and women, actuated by lofty and religious ideals, and thus to the development of states and nations founded upon principles of righteousness and truth. We think of the great literatures of the world, which have expressed for us the profound truths of individual and universal experience, and the sciences which have made us to know the facts and processes of our being and of the universe in which we live.

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We recall to mind the creations of master minds in the fields of painting, sculpture, music, and architecture, which have contributed to the education and ennobling of generations of individuals; and lastly, we remember the vast contributions of the industrial world, which, if we should attempt to catalogue them, would appall us by their gigantic proportions.

It is from these agencies that we deduce what we are pleased to call "educational values," — Ethics, Religion, Literature, the Sciences, the Fine Arts, and Industries; and from these in turn derive the curricula of our schools and colleges. The question naturally arises, What and how much from these educational values may we select to use in the training of little children from four to six years of age? In order that we may not fall into the error of developing a formal and logical program, the product of the intellectual point of view, we must turn again to the first factor in our educational problem, — the little child, — and see what connection we can establish between his small experiences and the great educational values. Dr. Dewey tells us: "Psychological considerations may be slurred or shoved one side; they cannot be crowded out. Put out of the door, they come back through the window.

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Somehow and somewhere motive must be appealed to, connection must be established between the mind and its material. There is no question of getting along without this bond of connection; the only question is whether it be such as grows out of the material itself in relation to the mind, or be imported and hitched on from some outside source. If the subject-matter of the lessons be such as to have an appropriate place within the expanding consciousness of the child, if it grows out of his own past doings, thinkings, and sufferings, and grows into application in further achievements and receptivities, then no device or trick of method has to be resorted to in order to enlist 'interest.' The psychologized is of interest — that is, it is placed in the whole of conscious life so that it shares the worth of that life. But the externally presented material, that, conceived and generated in stand-points and attitudes remote from the child, and developed in motives alien to him, has no such place of its own.”<sup>1</sup>

### *Ethical values*

It is not difficult to find, in the life of children, an approach to the educational value of Ethics.

<sup>1</sup> Dewey's *The Child and the Curriculum*, pp. 34-35.

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Ethics deals with human conduct and character, and the little child in his daily life, both at home and in the kindergarten, is a concrete example of phases of conduct and incipient habits. The kindergarten is preëminently an ethical institution. The community life of the kindergarten lends itself specially to the development of right conduct, and to the establishing of helpful and courteous habits. The kindergartner who neglects to recognize this phase of her work, fails signally. In the community life of the kindergarten, there is a comradeship, a give-and-take between the children, which develops good traits of character, and tends of itself to stamp out unfortunate habits and tendencies. The wise kindergartner supplements this self-training, which the child gets through contact with the group, by inciting the children to deeds of service and self-denial apportioned to their ability, to habits of daily courtesy, order, punctuality, cleanliness, so that the kindergarten becomes a veritable training-ground for beautiful expressions of child-life, and this in a way so natural and unaffected that it seems a spontaneous development.

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### *Religious values*

The little child in his unspoiled condition has a natural instinct for reverence. He repeats in this, as he repeats in other phases of his life, certain fundamental tendencies of early mankind, the impulse out of which has developed the religious life of the race. Through this native instinct for reverence we are to lead the child to the educational value, Religion. Specific religious training will have no place in the kindergarten program, but we may plant the seed for later religious training through the nurturing of those impulses which will later grow into religious experience. All religion has its beginnings in the feelings, and even after the intellect takes control of the religious experience, faith, which is the dominant note of the truly religious, is, in a measure, influenced by feeling. The little child, led as he is so much by his emotions, is particularly susceptible to the influences that stir the heart. He has a capacity for reverence which if properly nurtured prepares for the later religious experience.

As we are dealing with the practical problems of the kindergarten, we must face not the ideal conditions, which we devoutly desire, but the



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situation as it actually exists. In America to-day there is a marked lack, in many homes, of the attitude of reverence toward things high and holy, as well as a lack in the observance of religious rites. Sunday, the day set apart by universal consent, for religious observance, is, in the minds of many children, a day for excursions, for golfing and automobiling; a day when the big newspaper with the delectable colored supplement appears. The result of this is, that a percentage, often a large one, of the children who come into our kindergartens have never been moved and awed by the coming together, in a place of worship, of their parents and other parents for common acts of devotion; their little hearts have not been stirred by the sight of the mother kneeling at their bedside in petition to the Heavenly Father; they have had no occasion to wonder at the meaning of the family, gathered together for family worship. They have possibly been sent to a Sunday-School, but often even this substitute for religious nurture in the home is wanting. It follows, therefore, that frequently we have to deal with children in whom the instinct of reverence is wholly dormant. It is now that our knowledge of the universal tendencies and instincts of children comes to our aid. History and experience

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have taught us that the instinct of reverence is within every human heart. It is a universal gift placed there by an all-wise Providence, and so we take on faith that which we cannot see. We believe that we must treat the heart of the little child as we treat the tiny seed or the bulb, — give it right conditions and nurture it day by day, and in due time we shall see the beginnings of the spirit of reverence sending forth its tiny shoots. We need to make our own the profound truth taught by Froebel, that "Every seed of truth sown in the heart of a child must germinate and bear fruit; the process of germination may be slow, but if there is life in the seed it will bear fruit in due season."

Our approach, therefore, to the educational value of Religion is through such nurture as will develop in the heart of the child a sense of reverence. This nurturing process is effected through general influences rather than specific means. Nature, which speaks through visible symbols to the little child, offers us a concrete means of leading the child to a dim feeling for the Great Unseen, — to a sense of awe and wonder, in which reverence has its beginnings. The rural teacher and the teacher in the kindergarten of the small city have the privilege of taking the

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children out into nature, where they may observe the miracles of growth in their natural setting; where they may see the various phases of bird-life, — the building of the nest, the care of the young, and the migration in the fall; where they may observe at first hand the creeping caterpillar, and later the gorgeous butterfly. The kindergartner in our crowded cities, who, at best, is able to take the children to the parks for only an occasional outing, must, perforce, bring many phases of nature into the kindergarten, that the children may not be deprived of this valuable means of child-training. The planting and nurturing of bulbs, the garden where the children sow the seeds and watch, day by day, the growth of each little plant, supply in goodly measure their lack of direct contact with the larger world of nature. Caterpillars brought to the kindergarten, and kept in a ventilated glass case, where the children may watch them feeding and finally spinning their cocoons, make up another valuable experience for these little people. The children's interest in the various phases which the elements exhibit — rain, snow, wind, sun — is still another opening for the nurturing of the spirit of wonder and reverence. As these several experiences arouse in the child the sense of wonder,

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the wise kindergartner finds her opportunity to direct the children's thought to the one Great Spirit that "broods over the universe."<sup>1</sup>

There is also opportunity for the children to give expression to their awakened feelings of reverence through song and simple prayer. Experience has proved that little children, even those who have been most unfortunately environed, respond most happily to this method of nurture. We recall an interesting experience with one group of children. It was the Easter season. The children had had the pleasure of the Easter thought brought to them through the bulbous plants which they had cared for, and through the spring flowers. Their attention had been called to a cocoon which had been placed on the teacher's desk, and the thought of the life that was sleeping in the cocoon suggested. Patiently the children had watched for some sign of life in the apparently lifeless case. The next to the last day of the week came, and the last moments, and as the teacher was dismissing the group a child cried in a rapturous tone, — "It's coming out, the butterfly's coming out!" On tiptoes the children gathered about the desk, and observed in reverent silence that new life come forth and

<sup>1</sup> See Hughes's *Froebel's Educational Laws*, chap. VII.

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spread its beautiful wings. When it was at last fully out of its cocoon, and stood balancing itself on its discarded house while drying its wings, the children broke into exclamations of wonder and delight, as the full beauty of the Cecropian moth was revealed. After a time it tried its wings in somewhat timid flight, and a little later flew toward the windows where the plants of the kindergarten stood. The next morning the children found the moth still among the plants, and had the pleasure, for some little time, of observing the beautiful creature. Its tendency to fly repeatedly to the window brought from one of the children the suggestion that it probably wanted to go out in the air, and finally, by common consent of the children, the window was opened and the moth flew away into the beautiful outside world.

It is not for a moment to be supposed that any of the experiences suggested are to be forced upon the children. The children lead and point the way, the kindergartner standing ready to seize each opportunity as it occurs, to make each experience more meaningful for the children.

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### *Literary values*

The little child brings with him to the kindergarten, through the spoken word, the point of departure for his introduction to the educational value, Language. He comes to us with a limited vocabulary; sometimes with no English vocabulary; with incomplete and defective expressions of speech; and the kindergartner, by suitable methods, begins to help him to build for himself a better vocabulary, to express himself in simple, direct, and correct sentences. Stories, selected with reference to their adaptation to the age of the children, and for their literary value, are told; rhythmical poems are read to them, and they are led to express themselves through the reproduction of the stories which have been told them, as well as through simple verse, such as Stevenson's

"The friendly cow all red and white,  
I love with all my heart:  
She gives me cream with all her might,  
To eat on apple-tart."

### *Scientific values*

In the life of the child of kindergarten age, we find comparatively little to connect with the wide field of Science. Many phases of science may

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have touched his little life, but as yet he is not aware of them. The simpler phases of biology, and, in a small measure, mathematics as applied to his daily life, — the counting of his toys and pennies, — are about all that challenge his attention. From these points of contact the kindergarten leads him to observation and care of various phases of plant life, and of some of the simple and accessible forms of animal life; and the simple elements of number and form are incidentally developed through his plays. The method in the kindergarten, so far as natural science is concerned, is to avoid specific and technical training. It is simply, as it were, to prepare the soil for the sowing of the seed that is to come later on. In other words, it develops the attitude of observation of the thing in its natural setting: it instills in the child a sympathetic interest in the living thing, some knowledge of its habitat and habits, where the surroundings offer this opportunity, and then it is satisfied to wait until the child is older before more specific training or instruction is given.

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### *Artistic values*

To the educational value, the Fine Arts, there are various avenues of approach. The child's interest in pictures enables the kindergartner to turn his attention from the delights of the Sunday Supplement to pictures both embodying good art and subjects that command the interest of the child. By means of large crayon and sometimes of brush and water-color, the child may make his own small beginnings in the art of pictorial representation, crude, to be sure, but an effective means of self-expression. Clay offers a medium for plastic representation, and while the efforts of the children may be far from satisfactory from the art side, it meets a world-old desire on the part of children to produce through plastic material.

The universal appeal which music makes to little children is a fact too well recognized to need discussion. It is only in rare instances that a little child is indifferent to the appeal of rhythm and music, while occasionally we find a child who is so sensitive to the effects of music that he is dissolved in tears whenever he comes in contact with musical expression. Experience has taught us that as soon as the child can be



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led to express himself through song, both the indifference and the over-sensitiveness pass. The kindergartner meets the instinctive love of rhythm and music in the children through vocal and instrumental music. A percentage of the children, and sometimes a large one, is not able to express tune or melody: the voices are unorganized and drift about in a vague endeavor to grasp the melody. The kindergartner must, therefore, not only begin by selecting the very simplest and at the same time good melodies, but she must help the children to find themselves musically. Humming, the singing of one syllable to the entire melody, as well as leading the children to listen to the piano as the melody is played, are all valuable helps in organizing the children's voices. The ear must be trained as well as the voice, and as time goes on the children find great delight in discovering for themselves, as the melody is played, what the song is.

With so many good song-books and such a variety of songs from which to select as we have to-day, the kindergartner runs the danger of giving her children musical indigestion. She must remember that a few carefully chosen songs, well sung, are far better than a score of songs which the children only half master.

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After their voices are once organized, it is surprising how easily and readily the children grasp the words and melody of a new song, particularly when the song is used, as it generally should be, to express some experience of the children; as the coming of the first snowfall, the visit to the carpenter or to the blacksmith, the appearance of the first dandelion, or the advent of the doll.

The rhythmic game, when properly developed from simple rhythmic movements to the complete but simple dance, is a legitimate addition to the kindergarten plays: but here, as in other lines of her work, the kindergartner must be guided by wisdom and keep within the range of activities adapted to the age of the children.

### *Industrial values*

The little child, if not influenced by artificial restraints and customs, evinces a marked interest in the laborer, no matter how lowly his calling. If a carpenter comes to repair the house, the small boy cannot get near enough to him and his work; and his happiness is complete if the carpenter allows him to try what he can do with some of the tools, or possibly to help in some small way. A small boy of five years left his toys

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and the pleasures of his own pleasant yard and rode a long summer afternoon with a man who was hauling loam. The satisfaction that glowed in his young face, when at the end of the day he came in to his mother and told how he had "helped" the man, will not soon be forgotten.

The child's dependence on the industrial world begins with his earliest days and increases as time goes on. When he reaches the period of childhood he has a dim consciousness of this dependence. The industrial plays and games of the kindergarten tend, in a measure, to clarify and deepen this consciousness.

From the vast field of industrial activity only a few of the simpler and fundamental phases may be brought to the child of kindergarten age. He is not yet old enough to appreciate or to grasp the complicated machinery of our complex modern industries. To take him to one of our big shoe factories, or to a flour mill conducted in the expert fashion of to-day, is to thrust upon him an experience for which he is not yet prepared, and tends, therefore, only to confusion. The kindergartner sometimes needs to be reminded that there will be opportunity for the children to learn many things after they pass from the kindergarten, and must, therefore, be content to

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give them only that which they can properly digest and assimilate at the present period.

The fundamental industries which served the race in its early days, and upon which the child is vitally dependent, arouse his interest and attention and are adapted to his present powers of comprehension. It is, therefore, customary in the kindergarten to deal with the work of the farmer, the carpenter, the blacksmith, and where environment makes it feasible, the miner. It is also possible and practicable, in some instances, to have the older children not only come in contact with phases of industry, but also to engage, in simple fashion, in some of the industrial processes. The trial of the carpenter's tools may be carried on after the visit to see the carpenter at work. The raking, hoeing, planting, and weeding of the small garden brings the child very vitally in touch with the work of the farmer. The grinding of wheat-seed into flour by means of an ordinary strong coffee-mill is within the ability of the older children in some of our kindergartens. Later, the students of the school who are taking domestic science, are more than glad to make this flour into some form of bread for the children. The churning of cream into butter is another very simple and easily accomplished process for the

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children to undertake. An ordinary cream-whip and glass jar supply the necessary machinery. The bread made from the flour which the children have ground, spread with the butter that the children have actually churned, makes a feast the children long recall with happiness.

We cannot but deplore the practice that is current in some kindergartens, of forcing upon the children processes which should properly come at a much later age. A woman interested in educational work visited a kindergarten where she was shown by the proud teacher six or eight jars of canned fruit, said to be the work of the children. This woman had had considerable experience in the line of preserving, and as she looked upon these attractive glass jars, she was seized with an attack of skepticism; and she inquired, "Did the children do this?" "Oh, yes," replied the ardent kindergartner. As she looked at the peaches and the pears, the woman continued her inquiry; "Were they able to pare the fruit?" "Oh, of course not," was the reply. "They could n't do that without soiling their clothes." A few more judicious questions brought out the fact that the children had virtually done nothing but watch the fruit boil; and yet this guileless kindergartner was herself saying and allowing

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the children to say that it was the work of the children. It was without question a dishonest (though unconsciously so) procedure, quite in line with a certain sort of Christmas work that was once done in a class of so-called kindergartens, now happily extinct. The moral effect cannot but be bad. From the educational point of view, this procedure has no value, for the laws controlling the process — measuring, weighing, boiling, and so on — are all beyond the comprehension of the little kindergarten child. This work belongs properly to the children in the grammar-school period. It is maintained that the child in the home loves to take part in these processes, but it should be remembered, in this connection, that the little child in the home plays out these experiences almost entirely through imitation with his toys. He does not engage in the process. He would soon weary of that.

We find thus that the child's experience and interests function naturally, if in a small way, in the great educational values upon which the school curricula are based. Our kindergarten program, then, may find its genesis in the relationship which the child's experiences sustain to these values, and while its development must be simple and based on the universal activities of

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children, it may form the first link in a connected educational chain, thus, in a measure, realizing Froebel's dream that a thread of continuity should run through all educational procedure, from the kindergarten to the university.

### B. THE ORGANIZATION

#### *The flexible use of a formulated program*

For the young kindergartner, the organization of her program is an important consideration. She is too limited in experience, too slenderly equipped with the means and the knowledge necessary for meeting the problems and emergencies that await her, to trust to any sudden intuition to guide her aright. Because of these limitations she runs the danger of falling into a logical procedure; of forgetting, at times, the children and their needs. But even with this danger confronting her, it is essential that she have a formulated program which she may develop as the year progresses. This program, however, must be elastic. There are valuable experiences that come to the children at times which the kindergartner has not foreseen, and hence has not prepared for. When she perceives that an experience, which has in it elements of value,

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is possessing the children, her carefully prepared program should be set aside and the present experience utilized. It is a time to strike when the iron is hot.

### *Negative and positive illustrations*

Two illustrations, one negative and the other positive, may serve to point our moral. In a city where a uniform program held sway, an assistant fresh from her training-school observed, on the way to kindergarten one morning, her group of little people eagerly watching a flock of pigeons which had lighted in an open space, not far from the school, where some grain had accidentally been scattered. She stopped for a few moments and observed with the children this interesting episode and then hastened on, eager to develop an idea that this incident had suggested to her. Full of enthusiasm she went to her director and said: "May I use the Mother Play picture, 'Beckoning the Pigeons,' this morning with my children? I found the children so interested in a flock of pigeons I thought it would be a good time to show this picture and perhaps tell them a little story about the pigeons." The director eyed her in cold disapproval, and replied: "We are taking up 'The Fish in the



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Brook' this week." The moral to this story is emphasized when we add that the director did not have so much as a goldfish as a point of departure for the work she was developing with the children at this time.

In the same city a visitor chanced upon a kindergarten one morning when the children came in, one by one, each bringing an offering of horse-chestnuts, and eager to relate to the teacher the circumstances attending the finding of the chestnuts. The kindergartner laughingly observed, in an aside to her visitor: "It is no use trying to follow the program this morning." Thereupon she began to talk with the children, leading them to tell where they had found the chestnuts, as well as where they had originally been; then she recalled to them the blossoming tree in the spring-time, and ultimately led to the thought of the nuts as seeds, and of the life sleeping in each one. Later, she took the children out of doors, where they planted a few of the seeds in the school-yard, and then went for a walk to gather more nuts which they used later in the day in representative work on the floor of the kindergarten, in place of the gift play that was to have been. It was, for the visitor, an exceedingly happy illustration of meeting a common

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experience of the children so as to turn it to profitable account.

### *Four factors in the formulation of a program*

In formulating the program there are four things which must be taken into consideration:—

1. The children, — their needs and experiences.
2. The aim of the work.
3. The agencies by which this aim will be attained, — often designated as “subject-matter.”
4. The method of procedure.

### *Children's needs and experiences*

It is to be supposed that the young teacher is already familiar with the universal characteristics of children. She knows that they are spontaneously active, guided by feelings, living in a narrow world bounded by their personal interests; that their experiences are as yet uncontrolled, the result of environment and chance; that they are lacking in power of concentration, and that their attention is largely passive, rather than active or voluntary. The individual variances which she will find in her children will have to be interpreted in the light of the knowledge

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of these universal characteristics: but in the making of her program she must be led by the common experiences and interests of her group of children. This will necessitate on her part a study of the environment and the formative influences under which the children have lived prior to entering the kindergarten. To these she will be able to add the interests which are developed through seasonal changes, which will of course vary decidedly in their content, in relation to the location of the kindergarten, — city or country, — and also the interests and experiences which are aroused through the celebration of our several national and religious festivals.

These interests and experiences furnish the points of departure for program-making. The object of the program is to furnish the kindergartner with a guide whereby she may interpret, correct, enrich, and enlarge the experiences of her children.

### *Educational aims*

The kindergartner must of necessity have some definite aim as the goal of her procedure. Before fixing upon an aim commensurate with the age and abilities of the children, she must first determine what the aim of education, considered

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in its large significance, is. From the time of Plato down we have had the aim of education defined for us. It has run the gamut of all possible conceptions, ethical, practical, æsthetic, cultural, and sociological; each one representing, possibly, the special trend of the age in which it was conceived or the ideals of its originator. For an ultimate aim of education we must have one that is sufficiently comprehensive to include all aims; and so we take as our aim that which is defined as *self-realization*. The individual who realizes his true self does so not merely by the cultivation of his own powers, but through participation in the universal life, both present and past. He is responsible not only for himself, but for his contribution to the life of the race; and he, through giving and sharing, receives unto himself of the life and power universal.

With the little child in the kindergarten we can only make a small beginning toward so comprehensive an aim. Our immediate purpose, therefore, will be to establish the beginnings of right moral and social habits and right mental attitudes, while providing as perfect means as possible for the development of physical health and growth. In this connection it is necessary that kindergartners recall Froebel's mandate,

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that the child shall be at each stage of his development precisely what that stage calls for; and to add to this the teachings of child-psychologists, — that the child's physical growth and development are of prime importance during the kindergarten period.

### *Subject-matter employed*

In the selection of subject-matter we are influenced by the fact that the institution of the home has been the center in which the children's experiences have been largely generated. For many favored children the influence of the home has been coupled with that of the world of nature. The content of a child's experience is thus a variable quantity, and the measure of the world's activities which we can, even in our small way, bring to the children will differ materially in our various kindergartens. This, therefore, answers the question which may have arisen in the mind of the reader, in relation to a set or uniform program devised for all classes and conditions of children. It would seem superfluous to discuss the question if it were not true that such a program has already had zealous adherents and somewhat wide application. The working-out of such a program was observed by the writer in two cities

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for an extended length of time. Her observation showed that in the hands of a poor or mediocre kindergartner, the procedure was lifeless and mechanical, — the kindergartner was a follower of the letter, — while in the hands of an able kindergartner, the program was subordinated to the needs of the children.

It is impossible to conceive of one program suited to the requirements of all classes of children. It may, however, be possible that many programs may be similar in relation to their broad general features, but in detail and in the working-out of the program there should be a wide divergence. Take, for example, a group of city children who come from homes of comfort and refinement, children who have known country or shore life, and set them over against the children of the tenement district, who live in squalid quarters, whose homes lack not only comfort, but all the amenities of social life and culture. Prepare a program suited to the needs of the first group and thrust it upon the children of the second, — what response would you get? We had almost said, What response would you deserve to get? Reverse the proposition and prepare a program suited to the needs and experience of the tenement children, and then at-

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tempt to apply this to arouse the self-activity and creative life of the more favored children, — what result would you then get? A very good case of understimulation and arrested development. The children's powers would soon atrophy under such a procedure. Or, again, suppose that we attempt a sort of compromise program, in reality adapted to neither group, — what would be the result of the use of such a program in either case? We do not hesitate to say that it would be a predestined failure. It would be not only unsuitable in content, it would be lacking in inspirational quality, without which any teaching is flat and unprofitable. It follows, therefore, that the content of the subject-matter of our programs will vary to meet the requirements of the children whose development we are seeking.

The caution which must be observed in relation to the subject-matter of any kindergarten program is the danger of too elaborate a plan of action, — of an attempt to cover too wide a field of interests; to thrust upon children experiences for which they are neither physically nor mentally prepared. This is probably a sin of which every kindergartner of any long experience has been guilty. We have been too zealous for the child's mental development and we have

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overreached the bounds set by nature. Simplification in the subject-matter of the program is what older kindergartners have had to learn through experimentation. The young kindergartner profits by her older sisters' experience, and begins her work with ideals more nearly commensurate with the ability of the children.

In selecting certain phases of life for subject-matter, as illustrated in what we have come to term educational values, the kindergartner must, we repeat, be guided by the interests and experiences of her particular group. There is no rule that can be laid down. The children lead, the teacher must study to follow their lead and to turn these interests of the children into profitable channels. For instance, one kindergartner spent the entire month of May, with her older children, in the study of four birds, — the robin, oriole, woodpecker, and bluebird. It was not as exhaustive a study as the time spent might indicate, as only a portion of each day was given to this study. The birds, with the exception of the bluebird, had their nests on the school premises, and the teacher was able to combine outdoor life and this interesting study in a most happy way. The children, through crayons and clay-modeling, gave childlike expression to the ideas



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they had received through this study, and ample opportunity was given them to talk over the happenings of each day. It was a very profitable and interesting month for these children and their teacher, but it would have been an absurd procedure had the environment and interests of the children not offered concrete knowledge as the point of departure. The thing which the kindergartner must constantly bear in mind is that the kindergarten child is not old enough for abstractions.

### *Methods of procedure*

The method which will be followed in pursuit of our aim will not be divorced from the child, but in harmony with his needs and normal expressions of activity. Some one has well said: "Method should represent the teacher's plan of action in response to the child's initiative." The little child of kindergarten age expresses himself through varying forms of activity, — play, speech, investigation, and small efforts at construction and representation. These phases of activity form the nucleus from which we must derive our method of procedure. We take this activity through which the child has developed up to the present time, and utilize it as a means of

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further growth and development, our departure from the method to which the child has been accustomed prior to his kindergarten days simply being that we *consciously* direct this activity into what we believe to be safe and healthy channels, with a view to both the present and future needs of the child.

The play of the child when he enters the kindergarten expresses itself generally in three ways — plays in which the child exerts force, plays in which he measures his strength against others, and imitative plays.<sup>1</sup> Imaginative plays, in which the child builds a little play-world for himself, are not, as a rule, characteristic of this period,<sup>2</sup> nor are the purely dramatic plays as yet developed. These come later. When the children are more advanced, or so environed as to have had a rather rich experience, these forms of play constitute a legitimate part in the developing process of the kindergarten method.

From these native plays of the children spring our running, skipping, and like games, and our traditional games in which imitation strikes so

<sup>1</sup> See Blow's *Symbolic Education*, chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> It is true that many children of this age have experiences of a purely imaginative type. They are, however, distinctly individualistic, and lack in the constructive element to which we refer.

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dominant a note. From these we lead out to some industrial plays, the note of imitation or dramatization being emphasized according to the stage of development of the group of children with whom we are working.

The children's ability to use the spoken language varies according to the influences to which they have been subjected prior to the time of their entering the kindergarten. The manner of speech of the English-speaking child is an almost sure index to the character of his home training. The kindergartner starts with what the children offer and consciously sets about to build up a vocabulary, to correct and improve modes of expression, and then to enlarge and enrich the children's knowledge of language, through an introduction to phases of literature commensurate with their growing intelligence. Thus we find our method calling for the use of stories, carefully selected, and of poems, rich in rhythmic quality.

The activity of the child which takes the form of investigation or curiosity, as it is termed, has often been the despair of his parents, and on more than one occasion has brought down the condemnation of the household upon his small person. To the kindergartner, this activity forms one of

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the chief assets of childhood. Her method is to supply means and opportunities to utilize this power along constructive lines. She will provide, whenever possible, excursions into the world of nature, where the children may explore and discover to their hearts' content. Later, on their return to the kindergarten, the new knowledge gained, the new objects, animate and inanimate, found, will form the interesting topic of conversation for the little group gathered about the teacher. She will also provide materials, such as the kindergarten blocks, which can be taken apart and put together again, as well as combined in innumerable new and alluring ways, with no sense or act of destruction following. She will, in short, find many legitimate outlets for this really splendid activity, so that its reaction upon the child shall be for physical, mental, and moral well-being. In meeting this instinct for investigation, she provides also for that activity which expresses itself in attempts at construction. The kindergarten blocks and plays in the sand-bed meet this need, as do also a few of the so-called occupations. The attempts which the children make at representation vary materially. Here again the home influence has acted as a stimulus or as a deterrent. Children

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who have had crayons and blackboards with which to experiment in their homes have considerable facility when they first enter the kindergarten in the use of its representative materials; while, on the other hand, to the children who have lacked these incentives in the home, representative work is, more or less, a new field of activity. The kindergarten method is to lead the child, through the material supplied and through an amount of guidance sufficient to make the activity valuable, from very simple to more difficult phases of representative work, always keeping in mind the ability of the children. The tablets and sticks lend themselves specially to this form of activity, while the freer occupations — drawing with crayons, painting, free-cutting, and modeling in clay — supply the essential media.

The aim of the kindergartner in selecting these activities as the point of departure of her method is to lead from the somewhat aimless activity of the children to purposeful and useful activity, and in this way, directly or indirectly, to help the children to find and to adjust themselves to their environment. It is the first step toward helping the child to gain control of his experience.

Having fixed on aim, subject-matter, and method, and the way in which these features of

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our program function naturally in the life of the children, it now remains to bind these various phases into a harmonious whole, so that our program will not announce itself as a program, but rather seem the natural and inevitable process, following the coming together of a group of little children and a guardian spirit.

### C. THE DEVELOPMENT

#### *Two paths of procedure*

In developing her plan of work, the kindergarten finds two paths of procedure open to her. The one leads to the program based on relationships, — relationships to the home, to nature, to the industrial world, to religion, with the implications which these relationships contain. It is expected that the child through contact with this line of work will be brought to a consciousness of these various relationships, at least in a small way, and that the reaction will be beneficial to his moral and mental life. The other focuses attention upon the immediate activities of the children of a given group, and directs the procedure, by a selective process, along the line of these activities, day by day. In this procedure emphasis is laid upon the

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physical development of the children, the mental attitudes and moral habits being established incidentally. The one calls for a carefully developed program; the other develops a program of action as the emergency dictates.

### *Criticisms of both procedures*

The contention which has arisen in relation to these two procedures has led to various criticisms. It is said of the one that its plan of action demands of children apperceptive powers which they do not possess; that the results of the procedure are magnified by the overzealous teachers; that they, in short, read into their resultant work values it cannot possess. It is a case of false interpretation. Of the other, it is said that the work is not developmental; that it partakes too much of the nature of hit and miss; that save in the hands of an expert teacher, the artist teacher, it follows too often the line of caprice, with the result that the children never arrive, and therefore are not properly trained and developed.

The unprejudiced observer must admit that the criticisms on both sides are well taken. There are dangers in both procedures, and there is good, unquestionably, in both methods of work.

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### *The strong tendency toward a modified kindergarten*

The demand of the present day for a modified kindergarten is too insistent to be ignored. Indeed it has not been ignored; for in even the most conservative kindergartens we note a change of procedure, — modifications in connection both with the development of the program and with the use of gift and occupation materials. In some cases a radical change has been made. All that was of the old régime has been cast aside as worthless, and new ideas and new methods adopted with avidity. This latter course does not commend itself to the discerning. There is too much that is good, too much that has proved itself of permanent worth, in the old plan of action, for us to cast it lightly aside and follow after new gods. There is something too spectacular in this iconoclastic method: we are led to doubt the sincerity and depth of its progenitors. Yet we must meet the demand for a modified kindergarten, — a kindergarten that is in line with the best in modern pedagogy. This, we believe, can be achieved through a process of elimination and addition with our present kindergarten system, not by its destruction.



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Progress does not lie, as some overzealous people apparently believe, in the disorganization and disruption of the present system. The mania for change is upon us, and any change in the eyes of some of the teaching body spells progress. So we have the spectacle to-day of some kindergartners casting common sense to the four winds, and running madly after a new scheme, — any new scheme so long as it surely is *new*. The result is not an ideal situation nor a kindergarten based upon a happy balance of control and spontaneity, but too often a kindergarten where disorder and disorganization seem the order of the day. They have cast everything of the old order out, and they have nothing of worth to take its place. Whither are they tending? Why this change? you ask, and they are unable to give an intelligent or convincing answer.

The writer believes in the need of modifications in the kindergarten methods of to-day. There are phases of our present work that we must heroically cut away, and there are phases of the newer thought, particularly in line with the physical needs of children between four and seven years of age, which we must incorporate in our present system. We must make these changes intelligently, wisely. We must know

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whither we are tending. We must be able to answer honestly the why of this procedure. Otherwise we cannot be classed with educators, but rather with faddists.

A kindergartner remarked, "We are not using the gifts any more; nobody seems to be." To the query, "Why not?" came the reply, "Oh, I don't know, nobody seems to know 'where they are at' nowadays." So this unwise virgin throws out an excellent medium of expression for the children. She does not even put her wits to work to find a suitable substitute, but trusts to chance, for it is obvious that a substitute must be found. Little children grow through doing. They must have material upon which to exert their awakening powers. One of the chief values of the kindergarten is that it supplies legitimate outlets for the activity of children. Take from them the legitimate means of activity and leave them to find their own incentives within the four walls of a kindergarten room and you will be forcibly reminded of the old adage:—

"Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do."

It is now a particularly auspicious time for the inauguration of needed reforms in our kindergartens. The publicity which has been given the

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Montessori method has, in a measure, popularized the idea of greater liberty in the education of little children. The mind of the public is better attuned to the educational needs of small children than ever before. It is, therefore, expedient, while popular interest is alive to these needs, that the kindergarten world make imperative its demand for more commodious rooms, for appropriate apparatus for the physical training of the children, for space for gardens and pets, so that we may have the environment that will make possible a saner and more normal life for the kindergarten child. We are not blind to the difficulties and obstacles that beset the path of those who attempt to bring about an improved or modified kindergarten. We are fully aware of the indifference and the obdurateness of boards of education. We realize the expense that is involved. We appreciate, at its full value, the opposition and hostility of all those who believe in a prescribed and categorical training for the young. Despite these hindrances, we believe the time is ripe for a concerted action for a modified kindergarten, and we believe that the objections that will be raised and the difficulties to be overcome will be insignificant as compared with those which the pioneers in the kindergarten movement

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met and overcame. There are already many kindergartners working for an improved kindergarten practice. What we need is concerted action.

In taking a stand for a more liberal kindergarten we shall find ourselves directly in line with the teachings of Froebel. "Education in instruction and training, originally and in its first principles should necessarily be passive, following (only guarding and protecting), not prescriptive, categorical, interfering," are the memorable words written by Froebel over eighty years ago: they have a peculiar significance to-day. If we may judge from practice, it seems possible that the meaning of this statement has not been grasped by all kindergartners, or, at any rate, it seems to have passed out of consciousness after the student left the training-class. It is possible that she did not see its practical application. To-day, outside the kindergarten, she is forced to see the practical exemplification of this statement of Froebel's. Dr. Montessori in her Children's Houses has struck a high note of "freedom for development," and while her practice does not appeal to us as entirely consistent with her ideal, she has exemplified more truly certain ideals of Froebel than many of the direct disciples of Froebel. Many kindergartners,

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in their ardor to follow certain systems of work or to achieve certain results, have forgotten the fundamental principles and ideals of Froebelian philosophy, which give vitality and perpetuity to the kindergarten system.

Happily there has been in the past few years a distinct tendency on the part of many thoughtful kindergartners to bring into their kindergartens an atmosphere of greater freedom; to grant to the children more liberty for the expression of individuality along all lines of kindergarten work. It has to be acknowledged that superintendents of schools and principals often have to be reckoned with, and many a kindergartner has a very sharp check put upon the carrying-out of her ideals of practice. It is undoubtedly bad policy openly to oppose the will of your superior officer, but it is also a mistake for a kindergartner to discard her ideals which she knows are grounded in sound pedagogy, and settle into a mechanical procedure, because she sees this to be the pleasure of her superintendent or principal. This is an age of progress, and superintendents and principals will grow. We know of a supervisor, who a few years ago looked upon the introduction of hand-work in the grades, and the interchange of courtesies between the chil-

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dren which the work necessitated, as "desecration of the schoolroom," who to-day is warmly advocating the Montessori method. Even with an adverse superior the kindergartner may work into the program her ideas of freedom and self-activity, and, if wise and tactful, she will in time be able to bring her superior to consent to her practice, if not into agreement with her principles. This was well illustrated in the kindergarten of a certain city. The superintendent made it understood that *stillness* was his criterion of a well-conducted kindergarten, so the kindergartners worked for stillness, with the inevitable result, — more or less mechanical kindergartens. There was, however, one courageous soul, too well grounded in the principles of child-training to submit to the dictum of the superintendent. She worked out her problem on liberal lines. While the superintendent did not heartily approve, he did not forbid the procedure, and the kindergartner had the happiness of winning to her views the complete support of her immediate superior, the principal of the school in which the kindergarten was located.

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### *Free play in the first week*

In the opening days of the kindergarten, when the children come for the first time into new and strange surroundings, where they are thrown into close contact with many unknown little people, it is very important that this new and sometimes difficult experience be met so that the children will not feel too keenly the break from the familiar home life. It has become the custom of some kindergartners, and we believe that the custom will grow until it is universal, to make this first week of kindergarten a time of free play, from which, naturally and gradually, is evolved the regular kindergarten procedure. Instead of precipitating upon the little strangers the formalities of the kindergarten circle, gift periods, and so on, the kindergartner spends the first few days in making the acquaintance of the children, in helping them to become wonted to their new environment and to one another. In accessible places the kindergarten balls, the simplest kindergarten blocks, beads for stringing, a few simple toys, and an abundance of pictures are placed at the disposal of the children. In these first free days the kindergartner initiates some of the children into the various duties of the

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kindergarten, — the watering of the plants, feeding of the goldfish, care of the sand-bed, and so on. When the opportunity presents itself she goes to the piano and plays a melody, and as the children gather about her, she sings some simple song. If the children are American-born, the Mother Goose songs make an excellent point of departure, for the children are already familiar with the words, and the melodies which aptly fit the words the children naturally and easily grasp, and are joining in the singing almost before they themselves are aware of it. From this the kindergartner may lead to some greeting song, or any of the simpler songs which time and occasion call for. The gathering of the children into a circle for some of the ball games will lead naturally to the introduction of the movement plays, — running, skipping, and so on. The day will come when the time is ripe for the telling of a story, and as the children gather about to listen, the teacher is not only evolving another period for her kindergarten procedure, she is knitting more strongly the bond which unites her with the children. There has been no compulsion in this method; the children who manifest an interest in a given thing forming the nucleus for the kindergartner's initiative, to which the other



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children naturally and inevitably gravitate. The day finally comes when the kindergartner finds it possible to form her morning circle with no sense of strangeness and no anxiety for the happiness and contentment of her group of little people; and the kindergarten morning of play and work develops naturally and happily both for the children and the kindergartner.

### *Variation in the morning periods*

It has been the custom in the past to divide the kindergarten morning into short periods, varying the plays calling for concentration with periods of relaxing and recreative play. This has been wise in view of our procedure, but it is an admission that our work has savored somewhat of formality, too little of liberty: that it has been too much the plan of the teacher, too little the following of the children's initiative.

It must be acknowledged that in many of our kindergartens, housed as they are in rooms not adequate to the purpose, any more liberal form of procedure would result in chaos. The writer visited a kindergarten located in a finely appointed school-building, where the kindergarten occupied one fair-sized, attractive room, in which the children were so crowded that they elbowed

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one another on the circle, and in several of the games a number of children had to leave the circle and become observers, in order to give room for even a very sedate activity. Liberty of action was an unknown quantity in that kindergarten. There are undoubtedly many equally unfortunate situations, and while they are unquestionably a check upon reforms, they will in time be affected by the pressure of public opinion and educational ideals.

Therefore, despite the obstacles with which we must surely contend, we believe that every kindergarten whose environment will permit should begin with a modification of the periods of the usual kindergarten morning. More liberty must be given the children for individual expression and for physical relaxation. Instead of the kindergarten always determining when the child needs a change of occupation, let the children, as they do in their home plays, take the initiative. This is a matter which, in time, will take care of itself if some apparatus for physical exercise be supplied. In the matter of apparatus two obstacles will be met with — expense and needed space. The former will be more easily overcome, as, with the introduction of the enlarged gifts, gradually such an equipment may be acquired.

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The matter of housing our kindergartens in rooms large enough to admit of proper paraphernalia and opportunity for freedom of movement is a much more serious problem. It can only be brought about by constant agitation of the subject and a changed public opinion. For this the kindergartner must steadily work. Through her mothers' meeting she must preach this necessity, and through the mothers reach the fathers.

It is not possible, or at least not advisable, to give a fixed schedule for a morning's work. Any schedule must be elastic. The hours of kindergartens in different cities vary greatly. Therefore each kindergartner must arrange her schedule to meet the time at her disposal.

### *Extending the gift period*

The change in schedule particularly called for just now seems to be the lengthening of the period allotted to plays with the gift material, a period which at times is used for work in the garden as well. Kindergartners who have worked with the enlarged kindergarten blocks have often felt that the prescribed half-hour period did not give to the older children the time which they would have enjoyed spending upon the material and which they could spend profitably. By ex-

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tending the gift period and also the liberty of the children, so that they may, if they become wearied, leave their work for rest, play in the sand-bed, or upon the apparatus provided for physical development, we give to the children an opportunity, not only for more profitable use of the kindergarten materials, but also the chance to take the initiative in matters of rest and change, which will accord more with the natural play activity of children. We realize that in the hands of the inefficient teacher disorder and even chaos may result from such an arrangement, but we cannot plan for the inefficient. The intelligent teacher, whose aim is to keep the balance between control and spontaneity, will soon adjust herself to the new arrangement, and will find a new happiness in this freer method. In many kindergartens to-day, where two rooms are provided, a method similar to this is already in operation with the younger children. It must be remembered that with the younger children even more liberty must be permitted than with the older group.

### *Increasing initiative in rest and change*

For many years in the majority of our kindergartens free-play periods have been a prominent feature. We advocate not so much the extension

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of the free-play periods as the introduction of a greater element of freedom and initiative on the part of the children in all the periods — gifts, games, and occupations alike.

### *Wider use of small groups*

The advantage of working with small groups in the kindergarten is well recognized. It is the ideal arrangement, yet it has not been largely realized nor will it be until we have a changed attitude on the part of school-board authorities. The wise kindergartner, however, may work out this problem even with but one assistant so as to minimize the unfortunate features of the large group. With the freer methods of work and play, the children may be divided into three or four groups. This will of itself give greater opportunity for the initiative of the children, and will develop responsibility and self-control in the children.

The coming together of the children for the morning songs and the games is the only period in which the children should be assembled in one group, and in the case of very large kindergartens it is often more satisfactory to have the games in the smaller groups. The herding of large numbers of children for the various phases of kin-

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kindergarten work defeats every aim of right child-training.

### *Rearranging schedule for excursions*

The schedule of work for a morning must be a movable quantity. We have in the past been bound too rigidly by our schedule. We have been worshipers of time order. While time order is something well for us all to learn, we must not sacrifice the well-being of the children to stereotyped method. For instance, excursions into the world of nature should be a prominent part of a kindergarten program: where kindergartens are favorably environed these excursions should come at least once a week while the season permits, and at a time most favorable to the significance of the excursion, without regard to the time schedule of the morning. There are also excursions to definite points of interest — the blacksmith's shop, or the fire-company's house: such excursions as these may often be taken most profitably at the beginning of the morning or at the close of the morning, and the time order of the morning schedule should not interfere with the carrying-out of this phase of the work at the time which is most propitious. In other words, the work to be accomplished is more

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important than the time schedule and the time order must often give way before it.

### *The worth of a tentative program*

It is without question true that an expert teacher, possessed of wide knowledge, of large experience, of sure intuitions, and a fund of story-lore, could successfully evolve her program from day to day, meeting and utilizing the vital experiences of each day so that the work of the kindergarten would show a progressive development and in the end manifest a unified whole. Such teachers are, unfortunately, the exception, and for the beginning kindergartner to start out without the guide of a program, carefully developed from week to week, would be unwise and often disastrous. This program is not a hard-and-fast proposition to which the kindergartner clings and proposes to put through, whether or no. It should be simply a tentative program, which the kindergartner draws up week by week, or month by month, the study and observation of the children suggesting its development. It will be subject to modifications, eliminations, and substitutions as the work of the kindergarten progresses and the experience and interests of the children dictate. It is instructive for the

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kindergartner to compare at the end of each month what she proposed to do in the light of what she actually accomplished. This forms a new basis for her procedure another year, and is the stepping-stone toward a more perfect practice.

### *A suggestive general plan*

In the development of this program a general plan to be followed facilitates the work in hand; as, for example: —

1. General theme for the month.
2. Special experiences to be emphasized under this theme.
3. Stories, poems, memory-verses, songs, games, and rhythms that may be developed in connection with the several experiences.
4. Pictures and illustrative materials.
5. Excursions. Out-of-door life.

It must be acknowledged that a danger lurks in the following of an outline, — the danger that has already been indicated in another connection, — that the program may become too much an intellectual product, too little a plan of work fitted to the actual needs of the children. Notwithstanding this danger the outline seems a



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rather necessary guide to hold the young teacher to a definite development. It remains for her to be alert to the danger, continually to call herself to a rigid account, to watch carefully the development of the program in the light of the children's interests and activities.

After a week of familiar intercourse with the children the kindergartner will not find it difficult to discover her point of departure in some common interest of the children. It has become the somewhat general custom of late years, for kindergartners to use as their point of contact the home life and relationships of the children. This under some circumstances may be a propitious theme if not carried into the abstract realm; for it must be remembered that it is activities in which children of kindergarten age find their mental food, and not from generalizations.

### *Sample applications*

One kindergartner found her point of contact in the children's home interests, in their toys and pets. Toys were brought to kindergarten, with which the children experimented. One day a pet dog was the center of attraction. The teacher here found her opportunity for a story of a brave dog. Another day, two pet bunnies became the

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objects of interest, and the story of "Raggylug" was developed with the older children. From this story, exemplifying mother-love, the teacher was led to touch very briefly on family relationships, through pictures of the human family, families of squirrels, birds, rabbits, and kittens. The children being specially familiar with the gray squirrel, a story of a squirrel family was told to leave with the children the thought of parental care and filial obedience. No attempt was made to enlarge upon this subject of family relationship, the teacher believing that the children would imbibe from the pictures and the story all that they were able to assimilate at this stage of their development.

In the month following, the children's interest in the phenomena of nature that were then prominent formed the theme for the month's work, the environment of the kindergarten being specially favorable for outdoor life. A visit to the garden was the point of departure. Here some of the children gathered seeds from their plants; others hunted for caterpillars, and for the leaves upon which the caterpillars fed, so that in the days following they might be able to provide food for their guests; for the caterpillars were taken to the kindergarten, housed in the large

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glass encased boxes, where the children were able to observe the spinning of the cocoons. As the month advanced, flocks of birds in their southern flight attracted the attention of the children, and the deserted nests began to be in evidence. This led not only to an interest in the birds that were leaving, but also afforded the kindergartner the opportunity to take the children where they might see the birds that were to remain through the winter; two distinct varieties, aside from the omnipresent sparrow, being observed — the blue jay and the pigeon. The brilliant leaves were a continual source of interest, and when at last the trees were bared of their foliage, the kindergartner took the older children out that they might see what had sent the leaves flying to the ground, and might observe how nature protects the new leaf buds through the winter.

There was no prescribed date for these various outdoor adventures, the children's interests as the changes in the world of nature stimulated that interest acting as the determinant. About the middle of the month the children harvested the few vegetables from their garden. A visit was then made to a city market, where the children viewed the larger product of the farmer's harvest. A small boy's account of how he helped

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father to rake the lawn, supplemented by other small boys' accounts of helpfulness about the home, led directly to the thought of the meaning of all that was being observed at this season — preparation for winter.

These illustrations serve to show how the program may grow from the children's experiences, how the children may be brought into touch with various essential relationships, and how the kindergartner may trust the activities thereby developed to give to the children the reactions suited to their age and understanding, without enlarging too much upon the experience and thus running the danger of thrusting upon the children abstractions for which they are not ready.

It is a comparatively simple problem to select as our points of contact events of value in the lives of children who are, from all points of view, favorably environed. It is quite a different proposition when we come to deal with a class of children whose environment meets none of the requirements of civilized life. To thrust upon these children, whose homes are often two or three squalid rooms in a tenement, where the family relationships are distorted, the home life erratic, the ideals of home life, as is unfortunately or unwittingly, sometimes attempted, is to give

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to these children experiences for which they have had no preparation. It is like sowing seed before preparing the soil.

Sometimes the interests of these children are perverted, and the kindergartner finds it necessary to devise something which will arouse new and better interests. Sometimes these children are so underfed, so poorly nourished, that they are dull and stolid, and it is difficult for the teacher to discover a natural point of departure. Yet she knows that they are children possessing the qualities and general characteristics of the better-conditioned children. It is for her to provide the opportunity for these little children to expand; for her to bring to them the warm sunshine of love and sympathy, in which expression will come forth like the healthy blossom on the nurtured plant. How many kindergartners have had this blessed privilege!

The way in which one kindergartner met the needs of children of this class may be suggestive. We shall merely suggest the experiences which she utilized and those which she brought to the children. The first week she gave to getting acquainted with her group of children and helping them to find themselves and each other in the new environment. She found that the first lesson

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which these little children must learn, in order to make life with them a desirable or even endurable thing, was cleanliness. She realized that she could not preach cleanliness; that she must provide some concrete means of awakening in their minds an ideal of cleanliness. An indestructible doll of fresh countenance, with delicately modeled hands, dressed in spotless but simple garments, and a doll's bed equipped with immaculate linen, served her purpose. The doll made an instantaneous appeal. She was exquisite. All her good points were noted by the children. Her immaculate hands and nails put to shame the soiled hands of the children, as well as their nails, without exception clad in solemn black. Her clean dress led to the straightening out of crumpled gowns, and her tidy hair to the smoothing-out of tousled locks. The making of the doll's bed formed an interesting lesson in neatness and order. The fruits of this experiment were not immediate, but gradual and permanent.

The doll was followed by a bowl of goldfish, in order that the boys of the kindergarten should have something more specifically in their line to care for, and to suggest the needed lesson. The game, "This is the way we wash our clothes," for a time was made to run, "This is the way we

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wash our faces," "This is the way we brush our hair," and so on, and to good effect.

Nature had taught these children few lessons. The sidewalk and the gutter were their playground. The park was too far distant to admit of more than one visit a season. If the children were to come in contact with any phases of nature, the kindergartner must bring them to the children. The wild flowers of the season which had been brought to the kindergarten were already teaching their lesson of beauty. Space would not permit the introduction of any animal pets, and funds were limited. A few caterpillars were first brought to the kindergarten and proved objects of keen interest. A dozen plants followed, which, with the aid of the children, were transplanted to a window-box. Then came the excursion to the park, an effort of no small proportions, but one that paid in full. Nuts and leaves in quantities were gathered and carried back to the kindergarten. The graceful swans swimming about in the lake, and the squirrels frisking about on the lawns, made the greatest claim on the children's attention and memory, and served as points of departure for the work of the days that followed. Some toy swans and ducks, — Japanese toys, if we remember rightly,

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— with a pan of water, afforded unalloyed delight for many weeks thereafter.

The last of the month daffodil and hyacinth bulbs were planted by the children, and so ended a month in which the children's lives had been somewhat enlarged and enriched.

The kindergartner, in wandering about the neighborhood to discover what materials of interest were available for use in the kindergarten, chanced upon two precious objects of interest — a cow tethered in a vacant lot and some pigeons. These objects being within a reasonable walking distance furnished points of departure for play activities, stories, and songs; and thus formed a not undesirable approach to the Thanksgiving festival. The life of these children was so circumscribed that it was difficult for the kindergartner to see how Thanksgiving Day could be made meaningful for them, but she was happily surprised to find how the children entered into the spirit of the "Thank you" day: how many things they found in their barren little lives that were to them in the nature of blessings. The festival, both for the children and for the mothers, proved a morning of keen enjoyment. The children's interest in the fruit, contributed through the kindness of friends, was made significant through



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the recent visit to the park. That apples grew on trees, as did the nuts; that potatoes came from the ground; that the rain and the sun helped in the good work of growth, were ideas developed naturally from the children's joy in these fruits of the autumn harvest.

The month of December brought a new problem. The children were almost exclusively Jewish, and of the Orthodox type, which, of course, made impossible any celebration of the Christmas festival. That these children should be deprived of the joys of the Christmas season seemed to the kindergartner an unmitigated ill. She pondered her problem and finally decided that, even though her children must forego the delights of the Christmas-tide, they should not be bereaved of the spirit of the season. A New Year's party was the outcome, and the month of December found these little children, like their Christian neighbors, busy at work on gifts for father and mother, and the beautiful spirit of service pervading the kindergarten.

The paper dolls, which were the product of lessons in cutting, had been a constant source of enjoyment for the children, and now paved the way to the development of the doll-house, and incidentally to an ideal of home-keeping,

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which these children so sadly lacked. The furnishings of the rooms were first developed with the blocks, the dolls figuring largely in these plays, and determining in large measure the needs of each room. These plays were followed by the actual making of the simplest cardboard furniture, the work falling to the older children of the group. In this way kitchen, dining-room, bedroom, and living-room developed under the industrious fingers of these little children. Through plays with the paper dolls the use of each room was evidenced, and the house when completed was at the disposal of the children in their play periods. Thus home-keeping formed the theme for the month of January and was developed through the activities of the children.

We will not weary the reader with further illustration, as we believe the development of the program shown serves to emphasize our point that the program must grow naturally from the needs of the group we are working with. We may force upon the children a program which is the product of the study, but it cannot have the same vital connection with the daily experiences and needs of the children, and therefore cannot be as productive of good. Each kindergarten must work out her own program; by so

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doing she not only comes more closely in touch with the needs and life of the children, she, herself, grows through the process. Her work becomes thus life-giving in a twofold sense. Her joy and interest in her work are enhanced thereby. The satisfaction of achievement is hers. Deadly and monotonous is the work of the teacher who follows a cut-and-dried system, who is not alive to the quivering life about her, who does not realize nor accept the joy of responsibility in guiding and indirectly forming the lives of the little children entrusted to her care.

Only the woman who enters the kindergarten work with a sense of obligation to serve, with an ideal that reaches beyond the mere art of teaching, achieves success which is satisfying and abiding.

## IV

### THE USE OF THE KINDERGARTEN GIFTS

#### *Conservative practice and modern criticism*

FIFTEEN or more years ago, kindergarten practice, so far as the use of the gifts and occupation materials was concerned, followed very closely the prescribed Froebelian method, or at least the interpretation of that method as expressed by the leading spirits in the kindergarten world. About this time the claims of modern psychology began to be brought to the notice of kindergartners, and well-known psychologists openly attacked the then existing kindergarten procedure. Gradually, as a result of this, kindergartners were stimulated to make a more careful study of psychology and modern pedagogy, and to watch their own procedure in the light of the new revelations. In time, kindergartners who possessed initiative and courage, and who saw that their own practice was defeating the basic principle of Froebelian philosophy, — self-activity, — began gradually to alter their procedure, and to develop a new system in the use of the kindergarten gifts and occupations.

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### *Changing the size of the gifts*

At first their attention was called to the need that children of kindergarten age should have opportunity to work with larger materials so that there would be less strain on the undeveloped accessory muscles of the hands, and so that the children would be relieved of eye-strain. The gifts, and particularly the Froebelian occupations, were scored severely in this connection by many educators.

The kindergartner, therefore, who made no fetish of the gifts, but looked upon them simply as a means to an end, began first to study her children at their play with these materials, and then by degrees to experiment with larger materials, and to watch the effect upon the children of the new departure. She found no need for change in the one and one-half-inch balls of the first gift, or the two-inch forms of the second, but with the building gifts she saw at once the value of the larger and more stable material. She had to admit, as she observed her children handling the small fifth gift, that the gift was without question a direct strain on the nervous energy, as well as on the undeveloped muscles of the hands. She noted, as never before, the

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flushed faces of her children, and in some instances the extreme nervous tension present when the children tried to build up these blocks. The tablets, sticks, and lintels had always been to the children a vexation of spirit because of the ease with which the forms made from these materials were displaced. The kindergartner soon saw how larger materials would obviate these difficulties, and thus meet the demands of the psychologists. So she began her experiment with the enlarged gift material. She had been warned by the doubters that it would be noisy and clumsy, and that the children could not handle it; but she braved the objections and started on her experiment. In less than six months she was a complete convert to the enlarged material. She observed, as had been predicted, that the children made more noise in removing these blocks from the boxes, but she also found that the blocks were so stable that the forms made by the children rarely came tumbling down, as with the smaller material. She also soon learned that the children handled them with ease, and with a sense of conquest. These big boxes of blocks were something worth while, something worthy of their increasing years! The strain which had been present in the

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use of the smaller material was now eliminated, and the children, through the use of this new and larger material, were stimulated to greater and more satisfactory creative work; work that was more satisfactory not only to the kindergartner, but particularly to the children.

### *Changing the use of the gifts*

The change in the size of the gifts did not lead directly to a change of method in their use, although it may have contributed in a measure to the somewhat general departure from the prescribed use of the Froebelian materials. Influences had been at work for some years to lead kindergartners to a procedure more in line with modern pedagogical ideas. The mathematical phase of the gifts had been unduly emphasized, and many an earnest kindergartner had asked herself, To what end is this waste of precious time? Number, fractional parts, and geometric form could be taught with the gifts, and were taught to these little tots of from four to six years of age. It was said that we did it through play; but into what a forced and artificial play it often degenerated! To what end were we cramming these poor little heads with mathematical facts and ideas, much better adapted to

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a later period of child development, and surely more easily and securely grasped at a later stage? Those kindergartners, deeply imbued with the philosophic insight, saw in it an ulterior value, and read into this practice a present good it surely did not possess. The earnest kindergartner, seeking the well-being of her children, came to feel the futility of such a procedure. Here she was, filling the brains of these little children with mathematical ideas which they would speedily forget when they entered the primary school, if, perchance, they still retained them. She was learning that in the most progressive primary schools mathematics played only an incidental part in the first grade; that educators were showing that it would be more profitable to introduce mathematics at a later age, when the child's reasoning powers were more fully developed. Why, then, should she in the kindergarten be emphasizing the mathematical side of the gifts?

Some overzealous kindergartners tell us that the kindergarten does not prepare for the first grade, it prepares for life; therefore, why consider what is done in the first grade of the primary school? But if the kindergarten is an integral part of the public-school system, the



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kindergartner must consider the claims of the first grade. The relation between the two should be intimate and vital, and the kindergartner in her procedure should consciously work with the needs of the primary grade in mind. Otherwise the kindergarten has no obvious part or place in the public-school system.

The observant kindergartner also came to see, as time went on, that her practice had been defeating the cardinal doctrine of Froebelian philosophy. So much time given to the mathematics of the gifts, so much time to carefully planned sequences and to directed work, devoured too large a measure of the periods allotted to the gift work. The result was that the children were active in carrying out the ends which the kindergartner had determined upon, but had small opportunity for expression of self-activity — of making the inner outer, if you please. Hence, the really productive work of the children in the kindergarten, whether related to the gifts or the occupations, was distinctly meager, entirely out of proportion to the time put upon these means of expression week after week. The children could, perhaps, discover acute angles in neighboring buildings, but their development along the line of independent doing was

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decidedly curtailed. The kindergartner, therefore, naturally felt that she was hardly living up to the Froebelian maxim, "The child learns by doing," although she was following the so-called Froebelian method. She was, therefore, led to ask herself, Which is better, to follow the Froebelian system of kindergarten gifts and occupations, or the principles underlying the philosophy of Froebel?

Again, she found that the following of this method of work cut the children off from any large measure of work or play with the advanced gifts, the gifts richest in content and most stimulating to the imagination of the child. So much time spent upon details with the earlier gifts left but a small amount of time at the end of the year for these gifts which offer such splendid opportunities for the productive activity of the children. She, therefore, came to feel, with many outside the kindergarten ranks, that her procedure was wrong and called for a radical change of method if she were to give to the children entrusted to her care "the opportunity for the fullest development of the total self."

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### *Principles dominating modern procedure*

She had no quarrel with the materials. She saw in them splendid possibilities for the creative activity of the children. She could hardly conceive of any series of blocks better adapted to meet the advancing stages of the child's development than the kindergarten building gifts. She recognized that in changing her method of procedure she must not lose sight of the fact that all development is effected through a process of growth; that no hit-or-miss method would bring about the results at which she aimed. In other words, each day's work must be built upon the work of the days that preceded it, if any steady and lasting development was to be secured. She did not go about her change of procedure with the recklessness of one who has thrown off the shackles that bound her, and is at last free to follow her own will. Rather, she made her changes thoughtfully, basing them as she believed on well-grounded principles of pedagogy, and as time and experience added to her insight, she revised and corrected her original departure until at last she had a working basis somewhat after the following plan:—

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- a. The governing basis of all work with the gifts shall be that of self-activity.

In other words, the work carried on with the gifts, directed or otherwise, should be judged by this standard: Is this calculated to develop self-activity in the children; or are the children truly self-active?

- b. The aim of the method shall be to lead the children to productive or creative work.

- c. The dominant note of all work with the gifts shall be that of *play*.

In the kindergarten, play often leads into work in a normal fashion, the children themselves taking on the term "work" with a sense of added dignity and power. This is a legitimate process, but where the use of the kindergarten materials tends to long-drawn-out formal and tedious *lessons*, the spirit of play is killed, and the kindergarten becomes a veritable sub-primary of an antiquated type.

- d. The plays with the gifts may take one of three forms:

Absolute free play.	{ Experimental.
	{ Creative.

Play free, thought directed.

Play and thought directed.

Under the term "absolute free play" we have

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the two forms of play, experimental and creative. When the constructive gifts are first presented to the children, they are allowed to experiment with them, while the kindergartner remains "passive and observant." Later, as they gain control and mastery of the material, their work leads from the early experimenting into well-defined creative performance. We have, in short, products of the creative power of the children: simple, they may be, and crude oftentimes, but none the less valuable as an expression of their budding inner life.

The plays, in which the thought is directed and the play free, are to hold the children to a given line of work, which they may carry out according to their own ideas. This trains the children to persistence in a given line of endeavor, and leads them gradually away from their earlier desultory type of work. The benefits of this method are plainly to be seen later in the children's absolute free play.<sup>1</sup>

The directed play, in which both thought and play are controlled by the teacher, is given with the main object of suggesting to the children the

<sup>1</sup> I use the term "absolute free play," because in my experience so many kindergartners give the term "free play" to play which is in no true sense *free*.

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possible uses of the material; number may enter incidentally into these plays, and the simpler phases of form may be brought to the children's attention, but the chief aim is to further the self-activity of the children with the material in hand.<sup>1</sup> For this reason directed plays, as a rule, occupy not more than fifteen minutes, the remainder of the period being used by the children in application of the new ideas thus presented.

- e. The enlarged gift material shall be used throughout the course.
- f. The children shall be divided for their gift work into two or more groups, according to the size of the kindergarten, and according to their relative abilities, and shall be permitted to carry on their play, either at the tables or on the floor as they may elect.
- g. With the older children the major part of

<sup>1</sup> "The problem of direction is thus the problem of selecting appropriate stimuli for instincts and impulses which it is desired to employ in the gaining of new experience. What new experiences are desirable, and thus what stimuli are needed, it is impossible to tell except as there is some comprehension of the development which is aimed at; except, in a word, as the adult knowledge is drawn upon as revealing the possible career open to the child." (Dewey's *The Child and the Curriculum*, p. 25.)

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the time shall be devoted to plays with the advanced gifts.

As has already been noted, in many kindergartens, where the Froebelian use of the gifts holds sway, little time is afforded the children for work with the gifts richest in content, and hence more stimulating to the imagination and most effective for constructive uses. So much time spent upon the analysis of the earlier gifts and in the formal lessons precludes the possibility of any adequate measure of time for acquaintance with the advanced gifts.<sup>1</sup>

In one program which had a very general acceptance among the more conservative of kindergartners and a somewhat wide application, we found the first of the constructive gifts, the third gift, introduced the ninth week, the sticks introduced the sixteenth week, and the square tablets, the nineteenth week; while the fourth gift did not appear until the twenty-eighth week, and the fifth and sixth almost not at all. For ten weeks the children were kept almost exclusively on the first and second gifts, the gifts which least of all stimulate the self-activity of the children.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We specially designate as the advanced gifts, the fifth and sixth, the series of triangular tablets, and the series of rings.

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that this program has undergone some modi-

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Miss Blow tells us that in the plan of Froebel the true use of the kindergarten gifts called for at least four years for its realization.<sup>1</sup> In America the kindergarten course covers two years. Many children are in the kindergarten only one year, some a fraction of that time. This, in itself, would seem to be an argument in favor of a change from the regular Froebelian procedure to something that will be so adapted to the American needs as to utilize all the kindergarten gifts, rich in content.

The majority of the American children, prior to entering the kindergarten, have played with blocks of some form or other. There is rarely a child, excepting possibly the foreign child, who is not already familiar with the cubical blocks, though not in the exact size or number as the kindergarten blocks of the third gift. They, therefore, know the cubical block, and the older children certainly understand, in a measure, its possibilities. Why, then, should the child be kept from the use of these blocks for weeks after his entrance into the kindergarten, and then have them week after week as food for his creative instinct? The nutritive element of the third giftations since the writer was familiar with it, but it represents very accurately a procedure that was in vogue a few years ago.

<sup>1</sup> *The Kindergarten*, p. 135.



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gift is very slight, and the child whose creative powers are fed on this for a series of weeks is a starved little creature: he is the beginning of the docile (but docile only in the kindergarten), obedient, little grown-up, who figures too largely in some of our kindergartens to-day. This process annuls the principle of self-activity. The children from four to six years of age who enter our kindergartens are alive, eager, capable; why not give them, from the first, material that stimulates them to self-activity, that gives them opportunity for overcoming difficulties, for mastery of objects, instead of keeping them at work or play on objects not stimulating, not worthy of their sense of power?

The children of the kindergarten are very like the boy of whom Froebel wrote, who, when his father would roll the wood out of his boy's pathway that he might easily pass it, cried out, "Let it lie, let it lie, I can get over it." As Froebel goes on to say: "With difficulty, indeed, the boy gets over it the first time; but he has accomplished the feat by his own strength. Strength and courage have grown in him. He returns, gets over the obstacle a second time, and soon he learns to clear it easily."<sup>1</sup> This suggestion of

<sup>1</sup> *Education of Man*, p. 102.

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Fröebel we need to take to heart in the use of the kindergarten gifts.

### *Suggestions for the use of the various gifts*

It is, of course, impossible in the compass of this chapter to give in detail the work carried on under the new departure (now no longer new), but an outline suggesting something of the character and scope of the work may be helpful.

*First Gift* — Activity plays: motion and color plays: plays to develop and relate simple directions (round and round, up and down, etc.), and the primary colors; families of color.

With the younger children, simple activity plays are first given which lead naturally to the motion plays. The color plays, if given, are presented at the discretion of the teacher. With the older children the motion and color plays first given are to determine what knowledge they have of direction and color, and the later plays are given according to the needs thus indicated. The plays with this gift take the form of games.

*Second Gift* — Experimental plays with the three forms to discover the characteristics of

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each; names of forms given and relating of these forms to other objects (families of form); whirling plays; simple mechanical inventions; group plays.

With the younger children the sphere and cube are first given for activity plays, and the children are led to note the characteristics of these playthings — the sphere rolls, the cube stands still. This is followed by a game in which these characteristics are more specially emphasized; as, for instance, the game of ninepins. Some time later the cylinder is introduced in similar fashion. Games or possibly group plays follow, in which the children utilize the forms for some simple constructive work or for some play in the sand-bed. No analysis of form is given — that is, no development of faces, corners, and edges of the blocks. The gift is used only occasionally.

With the older children, the whirling plays are given, and later in the year they have opportunity to try their skill in the line of mechanical inventions, the individual boxes supplied with the staples being used.

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### *The building gifts*

*Third Gift* — Experimentation by the children: directed plays, chiefly forms by imitation illustrating objects made by man; creative work by the children.

This gift is presented to the younger children the first week of kindergarten for their experimentation; from this they are led to see the possibilities of the material through the suggestive work given by the teacher in the directed plays. These directed plays are very brief, as has been previously indicated. As the children gain in skill a full free period is given them each week, and thus they are started on the road to creative work.

Toward the latter part of the term, the children, if they have not already discovered it for themselves, are led to see how the gift may be used in the making of symmetrical arrangements about a given center.

If in the older group there are a number of children new to the kindergarten, this gift is given once or twice, or more if necessary, for free play, while the kindergartner observes the work and ability of the children. If, on the other hand, the group is composed of children who have al-

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ready had a term in kindergarten, the presentation of this gift is omitted.

*Fourth Gift* — Experimentation: directed plays to bring out the special features of this material — namely, enclosing areas in three ways, illustrations of the laws of balance and equilibrium, if these have not previously been discovered by the children; simple constructive forms, such as doll's furniture, leading to the furnishing of a house; group plays.

The younger children are presented with this gift as soon as they handle and use skillfully the blocks of the preceding gift. After their experimentation — this may cover more than the period of one day — the kindergartner leads the children to note the contrast in the blocks of this gift and those of the third, a third gift being placed before the children. The children are then led to suggest and to show what things can be done with the new blocks not possible with the old blocks. Again, in the directed plays, which, I repeat, occupy only a small portion of the period, the teacher gives simple suggestive plays. In these she is guided by the children, for her aim is to let them, as far as is practicable, discover for themselves what possibilities the new mate-

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rial offers. She then adds to their knowledge, little by little, until in time they use the material with skill and ease. Simple plays are also employed in which the children work together for a common end, either by individual contributions, as in the furnishing of a room, or by common effort, as the enclosing of a large area, building of a fort, and the like.

This gift is generally given to the older children the first week of kindergarten; if they demonstrate in their free play that they have already mastered this building material, the kindergartner passes on to the more difficult material of the fifth gift, recurring to the fourth as occasion may suggest. Where a large number of the children are new to the kindergarten, more time is given for the development of this gift, but the ground is covered much more rapidly than with the younger children.

It should be noted that the kindergartner gauges the ability of the child in the use of any given material, not by what he is able to do under direction, but by what he does independently. The constructive forms which he makes, the skill which he shows in adapting his material to given ends, and the ability to see, in a measure, both the possibilities and the limitations of his

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material govern the kindergartner in her procedure. With both the younger and older groups the third and fourth gifts are used in conjunction when the children have gained familiarity with the materials.

*Fifth Gift* — Experimental plays: name of the new form given; plays for the discovery of new forms; an occasional directed form by imitation; many plays in which the thought is directed, the play free; once a week, at least, absolute free play; group plays.

As has been indicated, the fifth gift is given as early in the year to the older children as is consistent with their ability to handle and use it profitably. At first one gift is given to every three children. After the gift is opened, it is divided into three equal parts, each child thus receiving one third of the gift. The children experiment with this new material and learn to build it up properly when their play is over. They play with this material in the same manner as with the other gifts, and little games for the discovery of the new forms contained in this gift are now given. The children begin these games with the two large triangular prisms, and find the various combinations possible. Another

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day they pass from this to finding what they can make with two of the small triangular prisms, then with three, then with four. The new block is termed by its technical name, but no attempt is made to teach the geometric names of the various forms made. If an inquisitive child asks its name, it is given, but there is no drill, no attempt to force upon the children the geometric nomenclature. The children in these plays profit by the experiences of one another; thus, when a difficult form is discovered by one child, which the others are not able to get, the successful child contributes his form to the group and it is made by imitation. These plays, which call for considerable concentration, do not last over fifteen minutes, and are followed by free-play.

When the children are able to use the new material with ease and assurance, they are ready for the fifth gift as a whole. This is a day of achievement for the children; they receive this large amount of fascinating material with the air of conquerors. They have at last attained to something commensurate with their growing sense of power. There is seemingly no limitation to the possibilities of these most alluring blocks. The added amount of material, and



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the new form, emphasized by its appearance in both large and small-sized blocks, opens up a big field of work for these capable little people. The plays with the third of the gift have bridged the gulf between the fourth and fifth gifts, and the children do not hesitate to attack the new material with assurance. The plays in the discovery of form are continued for a time, and are a great aid to the children in successfully combining the blocks for their various constructions. The directed work continues along the line of suggestion. No symmetrical forms — “Forms of Beauty,” as termed in the Froebelian school of work — are given with this gift, though the children are free to work out these problems if they choose. The kindergartner purposely omits this work, because she believes this material is for building purposes and so naturally adapted to constructive forms of work. She feels, therefore, in the limited time at her disposal it is much wiser to lay stress on symmetrical forms in connection with the gifts which are specially adapted to this line of work, namely, the tablets and rings. Plays in which the whole group combine, as in the building of a town, begin now to be a prominent feature of the work, and later in the year the children, in groups of

## THE USE OF THE GIFTS

twos and threes, occasionally combine their blocks in some construction.

*Sixth Gift*—Experimentation: contrasts of fifth and sixth gifts as to forms and as to possibilities; names of new blocks given; directed plays to suggest the architectural uses of the material; many plays in which the thought is directed, the play free; absolute free play; group plays.

It may be truly said that the possibilities of the fifth gift are so many and interesting that the children never exhaust it. Throughout the year it forms one of the most profitable of our educational agencies. It does not, however, tend to develop the æsthetic side of constructive work, but rather the practical. The blocks of the sixth gift, on the other hand, contribute directly to the child's love of the beautiful. The introduction of the column makes possible phases of architectural work which take the child farther into the world of form, and widen his experience, at the same time cultivating his sense and love of that which is artistic and beautiful. Therefore, when the children have gained control of the fifth gift, so that they express themselves freely and satisfactorily with its material, the kinder-

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gartner introduces the sixth. The children are already accustomed to a large amount of material in the fifth gift, and so are quite ready for the sixth, so far as the mere manipulation of the material is concerned. The blocks, however, are not as suggestive in themselves as those of the fifth gift, because of the fact that they develop forms of architecture with which the children are not familiar. For this reason, and because the children are now older and more experienced, more directed plays are given with this material than with the fifth gift, but these plays still keep to the idea of suggesting what the possibilities of the gift are. This gift is not generally presented until the beginning of the second term, although there is no rigid rule in the matter, the needs of the children determining its introduction. After the children have experimented with the blocks of the sixth gift, the fifth and sixth are contrasted, the children being led to discover the likenesses and dissimilarities of the two. The technical names of the new blocks are given and the column is developed as the special feature of the gift. Directed plays follow to suggest the use of this new feature, and abundant opportunity is given the children in their free play for the application of

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the ideas thus given. Group plays are also a prominent feature with this gift as the children advance in understanding and skill in its use.

It should be said that in the use of all the building gifts the children are taught to take the blocks from the boxes methodically, and at the end of their play to build them up and to return them to the boxes and to the cupboards. These little lessons in order and care of playthings the kindergartner believes essential to our American children, who are too often allowed to be lax in these matters in their homes. They are not, however, obliged to open their boxes in unison. They are permitted to remove the blocks as quickly and deftly as they individually are able. There is no set time for the introduction of any one of the gifts, the kindergartner being guided in this matter solely by what her observation leads her to believe advisable. It should also be remarked that in the case of one or two children who are not as proficient as the others, the group advances, and these individual children are given material adapted to their ability.

*Seventh Gift* — The circular, square, and all the triangular tablets of the enlarged material

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are used. Experimental plays with a limited amount of material; directed plays to suggest uses of material, symmetrical arrangements taking precedence, as the work with the gift progresses; term "triangular tablet" given to all the triangular forms; occasional group plays.

The tablets are used supplementary to the preceding gifts from the beginning of the year. The mathematical phases of the gift are not emphasized, save in relation to the elementary forms with which the children have already become familiar in the use of other materials. There is no analysis of the planes, no development of angles. The circle, square, and right isosceles triangle are used with the younger children, the circle being given first. A limited amount of material is first given and this increased as the children progress in its use. This gift is used less frequently with the younger children than with the older.

With the older children more emphasis is laid upon work with the triangular tablets. The right isosceles is given first, and the others in turn as the children master the work with combinations of the given tablets. The emphasis is laid upon the symmetrical forms, or, in other words, work in design, as the children naturally

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lead that way. The amount of material given to the children is limited at first, increased as the children gain in their ability to develop arrangements, some children being able to combine larger numbers than others. At first, tablets of one kind are used in any given combination, and later the various tablets are united, sometimes at the will of the teacher, often as the children may elect. The method which proved most helpful in leading the children to successful free work was the following: The teacher had the children make by imitation a center, or fundamental, as we sometimes designate it; then four, eight, or more tablets were placed at the disposal of the children to arrange about the given center as they might see fit; the only rule to which they were held being that of correct balance. In this work the children were led to see the value of working by opposites in order to insure the correct balance of parts. In time they advanced to absolute free play. Experience proved that the children did not readily see the application of the material to picturing objects made by man; so the kindergartner through directed plays gave a few of these forms, generally by imitation, thus suggesting to the children a further use of the gift. The tablets are

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given frequently throughout the year, but not as often as the building gifts.

*Eighth Gift* — Sticks from one to ten inches in length used. Experimentation with a limited amount of material, sticks of medium length and all of the same length being first used; a few directed plays; the material used largely to illustrate things of interest in the children's daily experience; number enters incidentally, — counting plays, and the like.

With the younger children the sticks are used chiefly for linear picture plays of things in which the children are at the time specially interested, and are also used in conjunction with the tablets for illustrative purposes, but they are not usually given early in the year.

With the older children the gift is used occasionally throughout the year, particularly as an illustrative means. For example, a group of children, after a visit to a farm, will work out the whole story of a farm, each child having a definite part to carry out — picturing buildings, fields, orchard, and so on. This play will be carried out on the floor so that the longer sticks may be used. At other times the material may be employed to represent some object.

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*Ninth Gift* — Experimental plays: development of symmetrical arrangements, both through free and directed plays.

With the younger children the whole rings only are used, a limited number being first given, beginning with the largest rings. The gift is used occasionally.

With the older children all the forms of this gift, save the smallest quarter rings, are used in the course of the year, and the children as they progress are allowed as much material as they can handle profitably. The plays are largely free, directed plays being occasionally given to turn the attention of the children to wider uses of the material.

*Tenth Gift* — Lima beans, medium-sized pebbles, horse-chestnuts, and the like are used in place of lentils. The work is largely free; the gift is seldom used.

After the experimental play the teacher gives some directed play in the following manner: Large sheets of heavy paper on each of which has been drawn, in bold outline, the form of an object, — animal, fruit, or an object made by man, — are given to the children, and they follow the outline with the material of the gift.



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In localities where large material, such as horse-chestnuts, can be secured, very excellent results may be achieved, the children working their ideas out boldly on the floor of the kindergarten, an exercise which is very much enjoyed by them.

It is impossible to tabulate all the benefits derived from the method above indicated in the use of the kindergarten gifts; all the knowledge incidentally gained; all the stimulus to new endeavor; all the incentive achieved through the overcoming of obstacles. We may, however, point out, what experience has shown, that the gift work thus pursued develops in the children initiative, self-reliance, self-control, power in the control of material, and ability to express one's self through material means, far in excess of the development of these qualities through the method pursued in former days. The kindergarten has often been astonished by the creative ability of little children when thus given ample opportunity to express itself. In many cases, particularly with the fifth gift blocks and the tablets of the seventh, she has realized that some of the children surpass her in their original use of the material. The joyousness with which the children pass on from

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achievement to greater achievement attests its value.

A kindergartner of wide experience visited a kindergarten in which the above plan of work was carried out. She chose to observe the work of the older children. The teacher in charge said to her: "I was planning to have the children use the tablets this morning, but if you would prefer to see the children work with some other gift, I will be glad to change my program." The kindergartner replied that she would like to see the children work with the fifth gift. The teacher thereupon gave to each child a large fifth gift and the kindergartner moved about among the children, free to observe their work. Each child worked out happily some idea which for the moment absorbed him, until at last there were fifteen separate structures, varying, of course, in intrinsic merit, but each one an expression of a child's thought and ability. The visitor turned to the teacher and said: "It is wonderful! I don't understand it. How have you achieved it?" The teacher was able to reply: "There is really nothing wonderful about it. It is simply the result of a steady growth in independent doing. We begin the first of the year to train our little people in the habit of

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working freely and independently with the various materials, and what you have just witnessed is the natural outgrowth of such a procedure."

We, therefore, present this scheme of gift work to the young kindergartner with no hesitation. We believe in it. We realize in what measure it is a departure from the Froebelian system of work, but we believe that, while it departs from the carefully developed Froebelian schools of work, it most truly embodies the vital principles of Froebel's educational theory, which are the fundamentals in any right system of child-training.

## V

### THE USE OF THE STORY IN THE KINDERGARTEN

It was an accepted principle of Froebel's that whatever contributed to the pleasure of children in general, in all times and all climes, had in it elements of value; that it, in some way or other, conduced to the development of the individual. He believed, therefore, that certain toys, such as the ball and the doll, which have given universal pleasure to children in all generations, possess distinct educational value. Likewise traditional games, which have been passed on from generation to generation through some occult medium, have lived because of innate worth. The story belongs in this category of things which hold within themselves elements of good, and which thus contribute to the education of little children. We are not surprised, therefore, to find the story playing an important part in the procedure of a kindergarten. We should, rather, be surprised if it were not so.

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### *The function of the story*

In the development of the race, the story in one form or another played no insignificant part. The bards of ancient times were honored story-tellers; and the epics of the ancients are to-day our classics. The love of the story is not confined to little children, for the story in an enlarged and elaborated form to-day holds under its spell the youth and the adult in countless numbers. Froebel believed that the child's love of the story centers in the fact that the story in its various phases expresses for him the experiences of his own little life, which, in a measure, he only faintly comprehended, but which fill him with yearnings for expression that are beyond his limited vocabulary, as well as beyond his as yet uncontrolled life.<sup>1</sup> Affection, sympathy, misunderstandings, struggles with temptations and unfortunate habits, heroic adventures, and heroic conquests of self, which are found in the story, particularly in the fairy-tale, hint of his own immature attempts at adjustment to his world. Just as the great novel pictures for the adult the universal history of the human spirit, so the well-conceived child's story pictures for

<sup>1</sup> *Education of Man*, pp. 116-17.

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him the beginnings of this history. Small and insignificant as they may seem to the dulled imagination of the grown-up, to the little child they are teeming with life and vitality and truth. Because these stories suggest his experiences, and sometimes show the way out of difficulties, they supply for his expanding soul a nutriment nowhere else to be found. This constitutes the prime reason for the use of the story in the kindergarten.

### *Its practical worth*

For those who demand a more practical elucidation of the value of the story for the little child, we may add that the story is for him the beginning of literature; for the stories, when properly selected, are giving to the child his first taste, and are creating thereby an appetite for good literature, which in time leads to the love of books, without which a soul leads but a barren existence, but with which the human spirit is never companionless nor solitary.

"Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,  
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:  
Round these with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness will grow."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's *Personal Talk*.

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Incidentally, through the story the child enlarges his vocabulary and increases his fund of expression. It also is not unusual for the story to be a direct means of inciting to better conduct and worthier ideals. The fairy-tale particularly contributes to the fostering of better conduct, because it so plainly and so simply shows in their true perspective the effect of such habits as greed, dishonesty, cruelty, and rudeness, while showing, with illuminating clearness, the beauty of their opposites — generosity, honesty, kindness, and courtesy.

### *Two mistakes in choice of material*

In the selection of stories the kindergartner finds a wealth of material at her disposal. Among the classics, myths, folk-tales, and fairy-tales allure her, while a host of modern stories, good, bad, and indifferent, await her selection. In this wealth of material there lurk two dangers, of which many kindergartners are not unmindful. There are so many good stories the kindergartner overloads her program. She presents too many stories, with the result that the children contract mental indigestion. Again, she is often inclined to present stories that are far beyond the comprehension of children of kinder-

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garten age. She attributes to them an assimilative power possessed by children of ten or twelve years of age. The story is beautiful, it takes her fancy, she must tell it to the children, and if it is dramatically presented, it often holds their attention, and she flatters herself that they have grasped the meaning of the tale, whereas in truth they have but got the shell of the story: its beauty and the truth which it embodies are beyond their grasp. She thus defeats two purposes — both her immediate effort and the effort of some teacher who, later on in the grades, will attempt to present the same story to children who are now able to comprehend and appreciate it at its full value, but for whom its luster has been dimmed by the premature telling in the kindergarten. "We heard that in the kindergarten!" is an aggravating salute for a fourth-grade teacher to receive from her group of children when she presents a story which her judgment leads her to believe is adapted to the needs and comprehension of a much more mature development than that found in our kindergartens.

The kindergartner must use a wise discrimination in the selection of stories. She will find that a majority of the stories written for children,



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both the classical and the modern, are not adapted to children of the immature age with which we have to deal in the kindergarten. For example, few of the popular Æsop fables are within the comprehension of children from four to six years of age; the same is true in general of myths, and many folk-tales. There are, of course, individual exceptions, but the above statement holds true in relation to the mass of children who are found in our kindergartens. The store of classic fairy-tales, however, is a more fruitful field of investigation for the kindergarten teacher. Andersen's beautiful fairy-tales, on the other hand, are, almost without exception, written for older children. Stories, such as *Little Beta and the Lame Giant*, and *Prince Harweda*,<sup>1</sup> charming stories which embody an elaborate symbolism, are far too highly refined and developed for kindergarten children. The fact that they are told in some of our kindergartens does not disqualify our statement. The same is true, with one or two possible exceptions, of the beautiful parables of Mrs. Richards,<sup>2</sup> which are much better adapted to the adult mind than to that of little children. In some

<sup>1</sup> Harrison's *In Story-Land*.

<sup>2</sup> Richards's *The Golden Windows*.

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cases it is true that stories in their original form may be cut and adapted to the intelligence of the kindergarten child, but it is an open question whether this is a wise procedure. A short story which in itself is a perfect specimen, or at least an excellent specimen, of story-making, ought not to be mutilated. ~~Why not pass such stories on to your sister teachers, who will have the children later when they can appreciate the story in its entirety?~~ It is probable that almost every kindergarten of long experience, in the early years of her practice, presented many of these stories to her children. She knew that they were fine stories; she loved them; she could tell them with such skill that the children listened spellbound, and she believed that they grasped both their beauty and truth. One day she awoke to the fact that it was a mental impossibility for the children to gain from these stories what she had imagined they did. She realized that she was expecting of them a process of apperception far beyond their ability. She began to wonder why they had listened so attentively. Had they really got any mental content from the story, and if so, was it distorted to meet their immature intelligence? Or, had they like little David, in *The Awakening of Helena Ritchie*, been

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fascinated in studying how many times she moved her jaw?

Despite the fact that the majority of children's stories are written for children older than those found in our kindergartens, we need not despair, as we still have a sufficiently large selection open to us. We need to remember that we must not overload the child's mind. A good story will bear repetition: the children's love for it grows as it becomes more familiar. We do not want to instill in our children that insatiable desire for change that proclaims the vacillating mind. We may easily do this if we present too many stories to them.

### *The chief characteristics of a good tale*

It will be profitable for us to consider for a few moments what the chief characteristics of a story adapted to the needs of children of kindergarten age are. By so doing we may have a guide in our study of stories which will facilitate our work in selection.

We may safely say that the kindergarten child calls for stories dealing with primitive needs, primitive emotions, and primitive experiences, for these are in line with his own life. He is not able to grasp a complicated plot, nor is he equal

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to the subtle analysis demanded by some of the modern fairy-tales. The story adapted to his needs must make a direct appeal to his imagination: the reaction must be instantaneous. He has no interest in the circuitous method of reaching a desired end. It should also abound in action and be expressed in simple, vivid language. The elements, repetition and direct discourse, if not a necessity, are certainly characteristics of an ideal story for little children. The favorite classics, *The Story of the Three Bears*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and *The Little Red Hen*, combine in a most successful manner all the elements needful to a perfect story for children of kindergarten age — action, simplicity of plot, simple, vivid language, repetition, and direct discourse. These tales are nursery classics: they have endured because of the instantaneous appeal which they make to the mind of a little child. The writers of these stories understood little children.

A few of the fairy-tales collected by the Grimm brothers and some of the English fairy-stories meet almost ideally the requirements of a story for very young children. Simple hero-stories narrating the deeds of children, and particularly the heroic deeds of animals, are accept-

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able to children. Humorous tales in which the humor is decidedly apparent, in other words, put on with broad strokes, make their appeal to these children; but tales in which the humor is of a subtle nature fall absolutely flat.

All who recognize the important part which a sense of humor plays in life will appreciate the value of occasionally introducing a purely humorous tale. A sense of humor is a safety-valve for us adults: a hearty laugh is good for all.

Historical tales, on the other hand, are hardly fitted to children of kindergarten age. The average kindergarten child does not comprehend long periods of time, and the attempt to introduce him to phases of history through the medium of the story is very largely a waste both of time and good material. Nature-tales, the object of which is to impart certain facts in relation to the world of nature, should be given in homœopathic doses. It is better for the child of tender years to get his knowledge of Nature through contact with her. There are, however, a few stories which illustrate for him some facts within his knowledge which may be safely used; and there are also numbers of good stories dealing in happy vein with phases of animal life from which the children derive much enjoyment

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and profit. We find little place in the kindergarten for the moral story, the sole aim of which is to deliver in pointed fashion some needed lesson. All the stories which we use may be said to have a moral value: the truths which many of them implant in the heart of the little child are much more effective than the old-fashioned moral tale, which more often antagonized than allured.

### *Telling the story*

It is the custom in the kindergarten to *tell* the story to the children rather than to read it. In dealing with children as young as we have in the kindergarten, this is by all means, with occasional exceptions, the better method. The story is an intimate thing, and in telling it, the teacher comes closer to her children than through the medium of reading. She is able also to adapt it more readily to meet the immediate needs of her group, and to make it more dramatic and realistic, and thus better to hold the interest and the attention of the children. Because the story is an intimate thing, it should be told to small groups of children who are gathered about the teacher. It is, we believe, a great mistake for a kindergartner to attempt to tell the story

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to the entire body of children, seated in the kindergarten circle. It is, indeed, a pathetic sight to see a kindergartner attempting this method. It is only in rare instances that she is able to hold the attention of all the children. Her attempts to throw the story across her large circle to the children most remote from her, to hold the attention of those nearest to her, and to enlist the interest of those who are not yet old enough, possibly, to grasp the beauty of the story, is positively painful to the onlooker. In every kindergarten there are children of various ages and stages of development, and it is not reasonable to expect that one given thing, be it story, gift play, or occupation work, will meet the needs of all of them. The work must be adapted to them, and for this reason stories should be selected with a view to meeting the needs and interests of the various children. This can only be done by separating the children into two, three, or more groups, according to their abilities, and then providing stories to meet the requirements of each group. This method adds not only to the children's joy and profit in the story, but it adds to the teacher's pleasure as well as comfort in presenting it. Story-telling should be a joy to the teacher; it ceases to be a

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joy when it passes from the matter of an intimate relationship to a more or less formal proceeding — to a duty that must be performed because it is a part of a kindergarten schedule.

It follows, therefore, that different stories should usually be given to the different groups on the same day. The habit of selecting one story and forcing it upon each group, whether or no, is pernicious, as is also the habit of selecting a given story for a set day for the children of all the kindergartens of a given city. We have witnessed this latter procedure, and have not known which of the two sufferers was more to be commiserated — the group of little children, or the teacher obligated to perform this bad pedagogical act. A story which may meet most happily the needs of the children in a kindergarten like the Horace Mann, of Teachers College, when presented to a group of East Side foreign children, whose lives are confined and narrow, will have a deadening effect upon the spirits of these children, and will be a direct means of developing inattention and impairing their power of concentration. It is not that the less favored children are to be deprived of stories that nurture the spirit and stir the imagination; but rather that they should be given stories



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better adapted to their needs — stories which they may be able to interpret through their own lives, rather than stories the content of which leads them into an unknown realm for which they have neither chart nor compass, where they are left stunned and bewildered, instead of stimulated and revived, by the telling.

Story-telling is an art. Some are born to this art, and some achieve it through persistent endeavor. Every kindergartner ought to be an artist in story-telling. If this is not possible, it certainly is not demanding too much to ask that every kindergartner *strive* to be an artist in story-telling. There are no fixed and fast rules by which the art may be attained, for it is too largely a matter of personality; but a few simple suggestions may help the inexperienced kindergartner toward more artistic work.

### *Suggestions for preparation*

After selecting a story, it should be read first with a view to getting its general style and features; then it should be re-read slowly as many times as is necessary for the individual thoroughly to imbibe its salient points, its special atmosphere. It must never be committed word for word. There is nothing more fatal to

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good story-telling, for story-telling is not a recitation. The teacher who memorizes her story puts herself in jeopardy: she lays herself open to the danger of forgetting it, than which there is nothing more disastrous, as well as to the danger of being easily discomfited by the remarks which the children are sure to interject, or by the entrance of unexpected visitors. Rhymes which appear in the story may be memorized, and certain phrases which are to be repeated again and again must also be learned *verbatim*. But the story as a whole must be made the teacher's own, must become a part of herself, so to speak, so that it seems to issue spontaneously from some inexhaustible source. There is no other way, no shorter cut to artistic story-telling. The memorized story can never be anything but a mechanical, formal thing, which is sure to fall short of its mission.

In order to make the story her own, the teacher, after mastering its chief features, must put the book aside and tell the story, preferably audibly, to no less an interested listener than herself, and later, if she be fortunate, to some child friend. She must not be afraid to make use of gesture where gesture is called for, and she must know the meaning of "dramatic fire,"

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while guarding against a theatrical display of dramatic pyrotechnics. In short, she must prepare for the telling of the story as carefully as she would prepare for any other phase of her work. When she finally gathers her children about her to listen to the story, she must put self-consciousness out of the way. She must remember Froebel's motto, "Come, let us live with our children," and she will find that neither the entrance of the principal nor of the board of education nor the irrelevant remark of a child will have any power to disconcert her. The story and she are one, there is nothing to fear. This happy condition will not be achieved after one effort, but it will come in time, if the kindergarten perseveres in her ideal.

In connection with story-telling, she must remember the necessity of the use of good English. She should be constantly on her guard against the habit of dropping into careless expression and poor enunciation. The children are copyists. They catch with incredible avidity her expressions, her inflections, and even her enunciation. The reading of good literature is our chief help in the use of correct English; it is also our best means of acquiring an appreciation of literary values. But both in the use of

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good English and in clear enunciation, habit is a great factor. She must, therefore, habituate herself to these virtues.

Miss Nora Smith gives us so good a recipe for story-telling that we feel inclined to pass it on: "One measure of pure literary taste; two of gesture and illustration; three of dramatic fire; four of ready speech and clear expression. To these add a pinch of tact and sympathy."

Tact, or the ability to adapt one's self to her group of children, to find its peculiar needs and to fit the story to them, is a prime essential in successful story-telling, and the born story-teller is sure to have this gift. Sympathy with the life and moods of the children, as well as with the spirit and content of the story, is equally essential, and is possessed by all good story-tellers. It is a mistake, we believe, to attempt to tell a story which you neither enjoy nor appreciate. You cannot give life to a story into which you yourself do not enter. This is illustrated again and again in those kindergartens where some outside influence prescribes the stories to be given. This is fatal to the development of the art of story-telling.

In the selection of fairy-tales it is sometimes necessary to make some slight changes which

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do not affect the thought and beauty of the story, better to adapt it to the interests and understanding of the children. For instance, in the story of *The Frog Prince*, it is better to close with the happiness of the little boy in the return to his home and parents, rather than to give the usual ending of the consummation of a happy marriage. The subject of marriage is not one of any interest to a child of kindergarten years; whereas separation and return are vital experiences in the life of children. For this reason, such stories as *Cinderella* should be left for a later period. We sympathize with those who object to the traditional idea of the stepmother or the stepfather, portrayed as beings of vicious and hateful tendencies. This relationship is not essential to the truth the story embodies; any old woman or man will answer as well. It is in the adaptation of these stories that the judgment, tact, and sympathy of the teacher are called into play.

### *The reading of rhythmic poems*

In connection with the use of the story in the kindergarten, it is not amiss to speak of the value of occasionally reading to the children poems rich in rhythm. Only a few such poems

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need be given, but repeated frequently. These poems meet the child's love of rhythmic sound, and the reading of them brings to the children the suggestion that these delightful things are found in books. Such poems as Eugene Field's *The Rock-a-by Lady* fascinate the children.

Take again such a simple poem as Lucy Larcom's well-known *The Brown Thrush*, and you can appreciate the appeal which both the rhythm and the content of the poem make to the emotions of the child-heart. Mr. Clement C. Moore's *A Visit from St. Nicholas* is another example of poems which give delight to children.

### *Books containing stories*

There are to-day a multiplicity of good books presenting stories for children. In the past few years there has been a revival of interest, seemingly, in folk- and fairy-tales, myths, and the like, and many publishers are now offering editions of these desirable tales, well edited, so that if the kindergartner does not herself possess a supply of such books, one or more of these excellent collections will be found in the public libraries of any town, be it large or small. Books containing various types of stories are usually

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found in public libraries, and these are not beyond the purchasing ability of the teacher.

The story-hour should be, and often is, one of the happiest periods of a kindergarten day. It is a time when the teacher touches the spirit and kindles the imagination of her children: it is her opportunity for helpful suggestion; for inciting to better conduct; for suggesting ideals of life through the alluring details of the true fairy-tale. "Once upon a time" are in many kindergartens, as they should be in all, the magic words that bring a new light to the eyes of the children. The ideal story is, in truth, a mental and moral tonic for the children. Would that we all knew how to use it with power and judgment!

We append herewith a brief list of books for supplementary reading; also a short list of stories of approved worth for general kindergarten use. Both Miss Bryant and Miss Lyman give excellent lists of books useful to the story-teller.

### *Reference books*

*Myths and Myth-Makers* — Fiske.

*Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* — Baring-Gould.

*Origin and Meaning of Fairy-Tales* — Bunce.

*Classic Myths* — Gayley.

*The Moral Instruction of Children* — Adler.

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*Stories to Tell to Children* — Bryant.

*Story-Telling, What to Tell and How to Tell it* — Lyman.

### *Stories*

*The Three Bears, The Three Little Pigs, The Mouse That Lost its Tail, English Fairy-Tales* — Jacobs.

*The Little Red Hen, For the Children's Hour* — Bailey and Lewis.

*The Frog Prince, Diamonds and Toads* — Grimm brothers. *Thumbling, Boston Collection.*

*Little Half Chick, The Ginger-Bread Man, For the Children's Hour* — Bailey and Lewis.

*Hansel and Gretel, German Popular Stories.*

(This is not the traditional *Hansel and Gretel*, but an adaptation of Grimms' *The Brother and Sister*.)

*The Proud Weather Vane, The Lion and the Mouse, Dora, the Little Girl of the Lighthouse, Boston Collection.*

*The Mother Stork, Kindergarten Review, September, 1897.*

*The Bird's Nest, Kindergarten Review, April, 1909.*

*Raggybug, Best Stories to Tell to Children* — Bryant.

*The Crane Express, The Lost Chicken, The Thrifty Squirrels* (adapted), *In the Child's World* — Poulsson.

*The Little Green Worm, Cat Tails and Other Tales* — Howliston.

*Stories of Brave Dogs, St. Nicholas Magazine.*

*Tommy Tucker's Bun, The Wee Pumpkin, Stories of Mother Goose Village* — Bingham.

*Teeny-Weeny, English Fairy Tales* — Jacobs.



## VI

### THE KINDERGARTNER AND THE PRIMARY TEACHER

THE little child enters the kindergarten at the age of four or five, and passes on into the first grade of the primary school at the age of six; or, possibly, as in some of our more congested cities, he enters the kindergarten at the age of five and is pushed on into the primary at five and a half, to make room for some other child who is clamoring for admission to the kindergarten.

#### *What the kindergarten achieves*

In the first instance, the little child has gained from his kindergarten training, provided this training has been of the accepted type, certain attitudes toward life which make him more comfortable to the amenities of social existence. The beginnings of desirable habits have been established, — courtesy, kindness, thoughtfulness, cleanliness, order, obedience, and the like, — and ideals of life commensurate with his immature intelligence have been made clear to

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him. He is, in a measure, more self-controlled than the child who entered the kindergarten a year or more earlier, and he is distinctly more self-reliant. His vocabulary is very much larger than when he first came under the influence of the kindergarten; his expression richer; he has gained innumerable ideas of the world in which he lives, of the relationships of things — all of which are his mental stock-in-trade, which he takes on with him into the primary school. He is eager for the work that awaits him in the primary, the allurements of which the kindergartner may have already set before him. He has put away the childish things of the kindergarten; he is now to read and write! But in relation to the general characteristics of children, he is but little changed. He is still the delightfully spontaneous being he was when he entered the kindergarten; brimming full of activity; guided largely by his feelings; gauging life by his sympathies; his power of concentration, though somewhat developed, still weak, and his attention almost wholly involuntary.

In the second instance, the little child has been very slightly affected by his life in the kindergarten. Five months or less is too short a time in which to establish correct habits or to

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develop the elements of self-control and self-reliance. The kindergartner has but made her beginnings in this good work when he is taken from her guidance and rushed on into the primary. If a foreign child, an improved vocabulary is, perhaps, his most noticeable acquisition from his kindergarten stay; but in general, while the kindergartner may be conscious of improvement and growth along all lines, to the succeeding teacher this is not marked, for its roots have little depth. Unfortunately, it is generally the case that the children who are subjected to this sort of kindergarten training, which is beyond the power of the kindergartner to alter, though protest she always may, are those whose home environment is lacking in the things needful to proper child-training, and are, therefore, the children who particularly need the full course of kindergarten training.

### *The common ground of kindergartner and primary teacher*

It would seem, therefore, that the problem of the primary teacher, so far as the training of little children is concerned, is not different from that of the kindergartner. The child with whom she has to deal is the same child who came into

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the kindergarten, changed only in degree. If the primary teacher looks upon her work as something more than the teaching of the three R's, if the training of the whole child is her business, the same as that of her sister kindergartner, it matters greatly to her to what previous influences the children who come under her care have been accustomed.

### *Our increasing recognition of the fact*

Not many years ago it was not an uncommon thing to hear superintendents of schools discussing the advisability of establishing transitional classes, *to bridge the gap between the kindergarten and the primary school*. Why has the interest in and need of the transitional class died out? It is, we believe, due to two facts. First, the kindergarten is no longer looked upon as a pedagogical abnormality: it is recognized as the corner-stone of a unified structure. Second, the ideals of what constitutes proper training in the primary grades have undergone a radical change, so that to-day the child passing on into the first grade of the primary does not find himself in a place the atmosphere of which is foreign to all his previous experience. We still have too many primary schools of the antiquated

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type; but in our progressive schools of to-day we find in the primary, as in the kindergarten, an air of greater freedom; so-called busy-work or hand-work, allied to the kindergarten occupations, engaging the children's attention; and stories, games, and dramatization playing an important part. In some cases the stationary seats and desks have been removed, and the primary, like the kindergarten, suggests a busy hive of industrious, free, little people.

In some of our best State Normal Schools the Kindergarten Training-Course has been changed to the Kindergarten Primary Training-Course, and all the students in these courses are prepared to teach either in the kindergarten or the primary. This, more than anything else, we believe, is making for an appreciation of the unity of the work, and the unity of the purpose, of the kindergarten and the primary school.

In view of the fact that the individual to be educated in the primary is not a different creature from the one to be educated in the kindergarten, that the means to be applied are not divorced from the kindergarten agencies, but an enlargement of them and a development from them, that the ideals and purposes are the same, — the well-being and development of little

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children, — it seems the natural thing that there should exist between the teacher of the kindergarten and the teacher of the primary an intimate and fraternal relation. That this has been the exception rather than the rule in the past, we must frankly admit: that it is happily becoming more general to-day we count as one of the favorable signs of better times to come.

### *Reasons for its retardation*

But why has this much-to-be-desired coöperation of kindergartner and primary teacher been so retarded? Wherein lies the difficulty? The difficulty has its root, unquestionably, in the attitude of the teaching body, both of the kindergarten and the primary. There has been a class of primary teachers who have clung tenaciously to mechanical routine, and whose hostility to the kindergarten is proverbial. Stiff-necked they have been, unapproachable, unyielding. Happily their kind is gradually vanishing from the pedagogical stage. On the other hand, there is among the primary teachers a class of women, alert, intelligent, actuated by high ideals, filled with no less enthusiasm for the betterment of the children under their care than their sister kindergartners. Many of them

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are as well educated and equipped for their chosen work as the kindergartners, some of them, possibly, better educated and equipped. They are ready to coöperate with the kindergartner, ready for any plan of action that will make their work for little children more efficient. They have gone halfway, and they have, alas! in too many cases, come up against the indifference of their sister kindergartners — indifference to the claims and the work of the primary teacher. There have been many happy instances of splendid coöperation, but there have been many more cases of lack of coöperation or even of interest in the two teaching bodies.

We bear witness to the fact that we have never known a body of teachers so filled with zeal and enthusiasm for their work, so ready to sacrifice self and time to its interests, so eager for growth of self, that they may better fulfill the duties that devolve upon them, than is found in the kindergarten teaching force. Kindergarten associations in so many of our cities attest to the professional spirit that animates this group of women. They spend their money freely for lecture courses, and they go willingly to their meetings to exchange ideas and discuss problems. To come in contact with a body of

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women thus animated brings with it a sense of uplift and kindles the spirit. Splendid as all this is, it has, we fear, had a tendency to breed a species of isolation in the kindergarten teacher and to beget an absorption in one's own special interest to the exclusion of the interests of the neighbor who is at her very door. It has bred indifference to the needs of the primary teacher and in some cases — we dislike to admit it — has begotten a supercilious sense of superiority, as though the kindergartner in case were made of finer clay than her sister teacher. Any fair-minded person must acknowledge that there are efficient, finely educated women in both kindergarten and primary work, and that the reverse is also unhappily true — that the inefficient, the weak, the shallow woman is found in the ranks of both the kindergarten and the primary. It is certainly not wise nor becoming for us to arrogate to ourselves superiority. Our deeds and our work will speak for themselves.

### *The advantages of coöperation*

The kindergartner has much to gain and nothing to lose from fraternal coöperation with her sister primary teacher. Many kindergartners spend from one to two years with little children,



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striving to overcome defects, to root out unfortunate habits, and to implant right ones in their stead; in short, to sow the seeds that will some day develop into desirable character. It is with a sinking at the heart that these kindergartners are at last obliged to send their little ones on to a teacher, with whom they have but a casual acquaintance, of whose ideals of child-training they know nothing, or possibly to a teacher who they know has no interest in the all-around development of a little child. That their time and effort may in the end count for nothing is appalling. Their hearts yearn toward these little children whose joys and sorrows have become so familiar a thing to them; whose aspirations, so small and pathetic, have often stirred their hearts; and to whom every bit of the way they have trod toward better conduct and a happy life is so well known. The primary teacher and her work are to them largely unknown quantities, the primary school an undiscovered country, although it lies at their door.

On the other hand, the kindergartner who lives in fraternal relations with the primary teacher need have no anxiety, or at least much less concern, as to the outcome of the work she has so patiently and persistently striven to ac-

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comply. Conferences between the two have brought about mutual understanding, mutual helpfulness. The kindergartner learns not only wherein the primary teacher finds the kindergarten child superior to the child who has missed the kindergarten training, but she also learns what defects in the training are apparent to the primary teacher, and so is able to correct her practice along certain lines. She comes to know also something of the work and ideals of this sister teacher, and something of the problems that confront her. She finds time, consequently, to visit the primary and acquaint herself with the work there in progress; and through this she gains an enlargement of mind and spirit.

The primary teacher, in turn, comes to a better knowledge of the ideals and purposes of kindergarten training. She learns something of the children who are soon to enter her room; of all that the kindergartner has tried to do for them; of all that she hopes for them, and of her fears for them. Thus she is better prepared to build upon the foundation laid by the kindergartner, and, as time goes on, they may counsel together. The kindergartner is given the freedom of the primary, and so the little children upon whom

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she has put so much effort, to whom her heart has gone out in deepest sympathy, are not lost to her. She may still watch their unfolding, developing life, in conjunction with her sister teacher. It is this that makes kindergartening worth while; that makes any teaching of little children worth while.

We urge, therefore, the young kindergartner just starting out in her work, and the kindergartner who is already established, to aim to create a cordial relation between herself and the primary teacher. Make yourself familiar with the work of the grades, particularly of the first grade and of its needs. Let your ideals and principles of work be understood by the primary teacher. Invite her to your mothers' meetings; help her, if she desires it, to establish her own mothers' meeting, and at the close of the year together combine in a grand parents' meeting.

On stormy days, when the number in the kindergarten is reduced, do, as so many kindergartners do to-day, invite the first-grade teacher with her children, either to the morning exercises or to participate in the games later in the morning. By so doing you not only enlist the interest and sympathy of the teacher in

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your work, but give joy to the children. It helps to strengthen the link that connects the two departments. In brief, be on the lookout for opportunities for developing a helpful and vital intercourse between the primary teacher and yourself.

This may not always be an easy thing to do. You may be unfortunate enough to be thrown with the mechanical type of teacher, or the indifferent, or the hostile. It is true that there are some primary teachers who cannot be won over to any interest in kindergartens or kindergarten ideals, but they are few. More often you will only have to go halfway: the primary teacher will be glad of your coöperation. Make it your aim to gain the friendship of the teacher. Possess yourself with patience and arm yourself with tact and sympathy. Be sure that this latter springs from within, that it is not a veneer, which the penetrating can so easily discover and will so quickly resent.

How mutually helpful and beneficial such a relationship may be only those who have experienced it in its full measure can understand. Be assured that it enlarges your work, acts both as a stimulus and a corrective in your practice, and reacts upon the children in such a way as

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to work most surely for their development and well-being. With so many primary-trained kindergartners the day of its realization cannot be far distant. May the kind fates speed that propitious time!

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